

IRELAND TO-DAY

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EDITORIAL

The brooding trouble over the world has come to a head violently in Spain, and, with the almost complete lack of principle that has characterised the conduct of the rulers of nations, sides have been taken, not as a result of enquiry into the root cause of the struggle, nor as to where justice resides but mainly according as a particular alignment will redound to the benefit of each country's selfish interests.



At Rome, the Supreme Pontiff expresses horror at the atrocities committed by Communists or Anarchists, the more freely as Italy, for her own reasons, favours the fortunes of the insurgents, however much she may coquette with the non-interventionists. The Supreme Pontiff has requested the Spanish Government to condemn, if it cannot prevent, the excesses of certain of its adherents. The position was much more difficult for Rome when Italy was waging ruthless war on Ethiopia. As to the atrocities, sufficient authentication is forthcoming to show that both sides will emerge with a very dark record, and history will have to sift to what extent the misdeeds were deliberate and avoidable or due to the release of forces of evil which in such times are uncontrollable.



In either event, our attitude at present should be one of unmitigated pity for the unfortunate Spanish people, who, when the strife is over are faced with a disorganised and ravaged State, a bitter, vindictive and autocratic government—which-ever side wins—and the fate, the awfulness of which we here can only dimly realise, of living and working side by side with opponents whose hands are dripping with brothers' blood.



In presenting our readers with a symposium on the position in Spain we are not to be taken as concurring in all the viewpoints expressed. As a fact, we endeavoured to secure expressions of opinion from six or seven sources, about equally divided in loyalty to one side or the other, and it is somewhat disappointing therefore that the actual contributions should be rather one-sided. In a way perhaps some of our daily papers may be regarded as offsetting this, but to the extent that

"Red savagery" is condemned and the "Patriot Army" extolled; to the extent that the Government's executions are condemned, whilst the occupation of Badajos by Moorish troops, together with the mass execution of vast numbers of troops and people loyal to the government, and the bombing of civilian San Sebastian, are condoned, so are we justified in reserving judgment until evidence that cannot be readily controverted is before us.

Two main points would seem to emerge. One that the admittedly bourgeois left government of Senor Giral, caught unawares, has had to avail for very self-preservation, of the organised assistance of the C.N.T. (Syndicalists), the U.G.T. (Socialists) and the F.A.I. (Anarchists) who, quite independently, have indulged in the wholesale attack on the Church and thus horrified the whole Christian world. The second is that the purity of motive of the insurgents is often unquestioned because, adventitiously, since they represent the reactionary elements of the army *junkers* and the landowners, they have not any anti-clerical partisans under their banner. But their methods and their authority to execute are open to question. In support of their rebellion, for instance, have they fulfilled the four conditions that are ethically considered necessary to justify revolt? (a) Long and persistent tyranny, (b) all peaceful means to have failed, (c) results not to bring about greater evils than those endured, and (d) substantial hope of success.

Spain has so preoccupied us in this issue that we have little space to spare for happenings at home which, if they leave a fainter historical imprint, at least affect us more intimately. We cannot pass without brief comment, the two recent bye-elections in Galway and Wexford. No fundamental principle was at issue; the Galway election was meteorically conducted with full panoply to elicit a vote of confidence and this, magnificently attained, inevitably ensured that Wexford would also like to be on the winning side. One fact emerged clearly, that as the campaign developed, the vote-catching issue became knit up in the words republic and independence. The sincerity or immediacy of intention in respect of these two words, however, showed marked gradations and variations.

It may be that we shall travel full circle to coalition—many

have been feathering their positions in anticipation of such a possibility. And if it were honestly based on fundamentals mutually shared, it might be no bad thing from the point of view of the happiness of our people; and all our political aims and objectives must refer back to this basic desideratum. The various conferences in the North among Nationalists and others are all vanes showing that currents are blowing which may yet freshen up, cleanse and revivify our motherland.

●

Belfast is complaining bitterly of the raw deal she is getting out of England's war-stimulated prosperity. An army marches on its stomach and a citizen is hit in his pocket. Has the South, in the event of a fiscal union, anything to offer Belfast which would to a substantial degree replace her British trade? If she got the contract for an Irish mercantile marine—would that do for a beginning? A small portion of such an order is already on the way.

●

Two matters must be very briefly dealt with. First, we think that those responsible ministers and public servants, who are always bolstering up the retention of the extra-judicial Military Tribunal, by explaining that the collapse of the jury system and its seemingly permanent abandonment in all cases of 'political crime,' is due to intimidation, are doing a definite disservice to the State, and are undermining its stability and sense of security.

Secondly—we had written at length on this but have now to condense—a conviction accompanied by a death sentence has recently been secured before the Military Tribunal, mainly on the evidence of finger-prints. That a reprieve was granted does not mitigate the danger. Cameras can lie, so photographic evidence, as war propaganda has often proved, must be discounted. Nor are we going to be Americanised into regarding finger-print-ology as an exact science.

A FOREIGN COMMENTARY

It was Rousseau who remarked that in the ideal democratic state the candidate defeated at an election, so far from railing against democracy in general and his rival in particular, would rejoice that there should be so many better men than he to go to Parliament. While our modern democratic systems have not yet quite reached the point where we may confidently affirm that the best men in the country are also in the Parliament, yet we *can* say that, on the whole, in the remaining democratic states, the Government in power is approved of by the majority of the people. This claim cannot be made for the non-democratic states, simply because the people are given no liberty of choice. Dictatorships, therefore, may be admirable governments in themselves, but they can never with any justice claim to have the support of the people, unless they periodically give the people the right to choose freely between the Government party and *other* parties with the same opportunities for putting their case. In short the Dictator denies the people's right to choose a form of government which *he* considers a bad one. The true democrat, on the other hand, must defend the people's perfect right to choose a form of government which he personally thinks disastrous. Upon the people's right to make mistakes, and to learn thereby, depends the whole stability of democratic forms of government. Just as no well-meaning cherub took up his stand at the foot of the Tree of Knowledge, equipped with anachronistic machine-gun, and determined to blow Adam to pieces "to save him from himself," so no true lover of democratic liberty will resort to violence in order to prevent a nation from choosing its own government, *even if the choice is a bad one.*

* * *

The above remarks might refer to the situation in many countries to-day. How dangerous it would be in this country, for instance, if one party, defeated in the elections, were to resort at once to the law of the bullet. Imbued with such a doctrine, might not religious minorities, either in the North or South, resort to acts of violence in an effort to "save" Ireland from the Orangeman or from the "Papists." Elsewhere in this number the Spanish situation is dealt with by observers more familiar than I with the conditions in Spain. There are, however, certain basic facts worth reviewing from the point of view of the "man in the street," more especially since facts would appear to be strangely absent from many of the current reports of what is taking place. In the first place the Government, which is

*not only not Communist, but had never a single Communist in it, was elected in a perfectly democratic way under the auspices of the previous government. The accusation *après-coup* of personation and intimidation, assuming that it were substantiated by evidence, would hardly justify an armed revolt. In the recent by-election in this country the Dublin papers considered it worth while to point out with evident surprise that in Galway *this* time there had been *no* accusations of personation or intimidation. Again, there are vast numbers of Catholics on *both* sides for Spain is almost 100 per cent. Catholic. And therefore when we consider the millions of Catholics who are fighting *for* the government, even assuming that they are all led astray by Red "agitators," it is obvious that the stories of atrocities against priests and nuns must be carefully sifted before being accepted. Obviously the Red agitator's job of leading hundreds of thousands of Catholics astray is not simplified if he proceeds first to desecrate all that they have been taught to hold sacred from their earliest childhood. Or else, and the proposition will not be accepted by everyone, a handful of Red "agitators" have succeeded, in three or four years, in gaining more influence over the Spanish worker than have the latter's spiritual advisers in the course of several centuries.

* * *

The difficulty of judging the situation is not lessened by the attitude of our Press. One paper alone attempts objectivity. The "Irish Times" has succeeded in avoiding the hysteria which would seem to have seized our other dailies. One of these last, fresh from rejoicing over Italian victories, many of which entailed the destruction of churches and the slaughter or banishment of priests and bishops, is now horrified at the stories which it prints about Spain. This same paper *demandé* in 1916, in a famous editorial, the execution of Connolly and the other Irish Revolutionaries who had dared to defy the powers that were. Rebels in Spain, however, provided they are on the side of the landlord, are respectable. Such "journalism" is beneath contempt. The horror of the "Independent" at the shooting of prisoners betrays a grim artificiality, in view of its attitude when the execution of hostages was part of the avowed "reprisal" policy of Mr. Cosgrave's Government. The indiscriminate eagerness, too, with which the statements of all refugees from Spain are received, gives valuable food for thought, when we remember how the proposal to hear Ernst Toller in Dublin was greeted.

It would be a mistake, therefore, for a Dubliner to imagine that by reading his three dailies and comparing them, he will be able to "judge for himself." To read one reasonably objective account and two extremely partial pro-Franco accounts is *not* a sound way of reading "all sides." That there has been fierce and merciless fighting on both sides is undeniable, and that there will be extreme bitterness for several generations; but that it is a war of religion against "Red savagery" is, to put it mildly, a misinterpretation of the facts. One remembers how the British government, not so very long ago, appealed to most of Ireland to "save Catholic Belgium," and to certain Northern counties to "fight for King and Empire." This method of recruiting should be too familiar by now to win many sympathisers.

* * *

When we turn to the other countries in Europe we find a strange alignment of forces in favour of the saintly Franco. The French Government were left the task of proposing that a policy of non-intervention should be pursued. With varying degrees of alacrity several other powers have rallied to this idea. Yet, though wholesale intervention on both sides would almost inevitably bring war to the world, we find peace-desiring Italy and Germany reluctant to decide upon non-intervention. Concession after concession has been made and still they hesitate; purely for the sake of Christianity and Civilization of course. We are familiar with Mussolini's views. And, in the interim caused by this hesitation, the proposers of non-intervention are, ipso facto, prevented from helping either side, while German and Italian tourists have suddenly acquired a taste for travelling in bombing planes and a positive passion for visiting Spain. Hitler is fond of picturing Germany surrounded by foes, yet why is he so reluctant to examine with any speed, the Franco-British offer of co-operation? He is wont to speak passionately of his desire for peace and his willingness at all times to co-operate with France. Would it not be simpler to do so? Or does he find Blum's willingness to accept his conditions somewhat disconcerting? One can imagine the sense of burning wrong in Germany had Russia and France decided to "save" Germany from the Nazis, yet Hitler hesitates as to whether he should concede Spain the right to choose its own government. Evidently the price of peace with Fascist states is to become Fascist. The idea is a simple one.

* * *

A host of questions come to one's mind if an attempt be made

to foresee the outcome of this rebellion. For instance, if the Republican Government is to be branded abroad as Communist for the purpose of smashing it, will we have any right to be surprised if it becomes a good deal more Communist with victory than ever it was before? In the event of a Dictatorship in Spain, who could honestly claim that the chance of peace in Europe has been increased? Will more harm have been done to Christianity among the Spanish workers by the Government's defence of the Republican Constitution, than by the encouragement of Fascist rebellion on the part of large numbers of Christian ministers? One thing is certain: that the Spanish "Red" Government will have, in order to gain recognition for Spain, as a respectable country, to make sufficient money to buy in large quantities in foreign markets. No outcry about their lack of Christian principles will be tolerated once they are in a position to do business with the outside world. Lest this be thought an unjustified comment, I might recall the intense wave of indignation throughout the world, when Russia became Communist. Every effort was made to prevent their experiment from succeeding: blockades, invading armies, enforced starvation, propaganda about their terrible lack of religion. Since then, however, they have reached a point where they can *buy* from us, and so they are welcomed at our Horse Show and we take their Russian gold without a murmur. In vain we look for a Christian protest by the "Independent" newspapers. Business is business.

* * *

Those with a slight knowledge of the geography of France will have been amused to learn that King Edward postponed his holiday in Cannes, because it was "too near the Spanish frontier." No doubt, now that the Prince of the Asturias has left Cannes, that town will be found, on second thoughts, to be much nearer the Italian frontier than the Spanish one, and the King's holiday may yet include a visit there.

* * *

The French Chamber has now risen for the summer recess after some stormy debates. It is significant that the Senate, which has, unlike our own late lamented, a power of *absolute* veto (save for finance bills), has held up a large number of Government measures, including the very reasonable proposal to increase the school-leaving age from 13 to 14. Over ten years ago the Frenchwoman would have had the vote, had it not been for the Senate. It is not improbable that it would have held up

all the new Government's proposals were it not for the widespread strikes all over the country. These strikes, incomprehensible to many people outside France, made it quite clear to the Senate that if it refused to allow constitutional change, revolutionary change would follow close upon such a refusal. The most immediately visible effect of the new French laws is probably the departure for fifteen-day holidays with pay, of hundreds of thousands of workers who had never had a real holiday before. The descent of this joyous crowd upon the various French watering-places, which have been doing very little business lately, has been greeted with mixed feelings. The wealthy *habitués* view with horror this invasion by the common people of resorts which had hitherto been almost their private property. Hotelkeepers are wondering whether there may not be something to be said for the Popular Front Government after all.

* * *

In India, where the British interests are occupied almost solely in training the Indians so that very soon they will be able to govern themselves almost as well as the National Government governs England, the main topic of discussion in political circles is the nice new Act of Parliament which has been passed for them. "A Charter of Slavery" it is termed by Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress, but then he is an Indian, and probably doesn't understand these things. In his Presidential address to the Forty-Ninth Session of the Congress, however, he makes a statement which is also worth quoting:—"But of one thing I must say a few words, for to me it is one of the most vital things that I value. That is the tremendous deprivation of civil liberties in India. A government that has to rely on the Criminal Law Amendment Act . . . that suppresses the press and literature, that bans hundreds of organisations, that keeps people in prison without trial . . . is a government that has ceased to have even a shadow of a justification for its existence." It is almost as if the Indians did not realise that Britain is working might and main to civilize and educate them. True, 321 millions out of a total population of 352 millions are still illiterate, but doubtless in another two hundred years of British rule that figure will be considerably reduced.

OWEN SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON

SPAIN: A SYMPOSIUM

ORIGIN OF SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The actual Rebellion against the Constitutional Government of Spain is in no way a social movement, not even an economic movement. It does not signify in any circumstances a reaction against any extreme measure that the Government of the Republic might have adopted during the five years of its existence. In this period of Spanish history no extreme measures have been taken. Progress in social laws has been nil.

Private property has been respected to a degree inconceivable in modern times. Religious liberty was respected, as a matter of fact much more than during the first Republic, and much more so than in the times of Mendizabal. The working classes have obtained no better conditions. The large industrial and commercial monopolies have maintained their former supremacy. A dozen large bankers have persisted during these years, the indisputable owners of the country. Hence the actual Rebellion was not the outcome of either a social or an economic cause.

It is classified by those who do not know the facts as a Fascist movement. The real position is that the Spanish Fascist Party does not count: with half-dozen Deputies in the Parliament, they represent a few thousand citizens, perhaps with time it might have become a robust Party—not by its doctrines, but by the collapse generally of the Parliamentary system throughout the world.

The whole movement is not a reaction against a religious persecution, for none existed outside the special prohibitions in force against certain religious orders who were not 'legal'; everything else has continued in Spain as in former periods, with the only difference that the Spanish Republican State became a separate institution from the Church. The State nevertheless continued paying stipends to the Catholic Church to the extent of many millions of pesetas, an amount which approached, if it did not equal, the revenues under previous regimes.

The actual Rebellion is simply another military movement. Spain by its special situation and conditions for the last hundred years has had no exterior enemy and no expansionist policy of any sort. So that there was no justification to maintain an armed force that consumed one-half of the National Budget and was the sole cause of the total of the National debt. Spain was always a military power, but for the last hundred years Spain had no exterior enemy. But the army existed and not being able to employ itself against foreign foes, it turned against its own citizens.

In the last quarter of last century after feeding three Civil Wars it occasioned the absurd war with the rest of the Spanish Colonies that brought about the suicidal war between Spain and the U.S.A. Hardly had the country recovered when they began the war in Morocco with the disasters of 1906 and 1909 that brought about the civil protest of Barcelona and Malaga in the latter year. The reaction against the Governmental militarist was responsible for the liberalism of 1912, with the Government of Canalejas, at whose death they again commenced the mad race which culminated in the disasters of Morocco in 1921. These necessitated a Parliamentary investigation and the facts disclosed were so damning that to save the regime and army, the latter had to seize power by force in 1923.

From this date, owing to the divisions in the army, it is easy to visualise that a change of regime was the aim of many. This change took place in 1931. The Republic was proclaimed and one of the Ministers with great vision proposed to reduce the army to its proper level, 35,000 officers for a body of 150,000 men was the army of Spain in 1931. The military predominance in civil life was absolute. The military caste dominated Spain. The number of officers was reduced by half, and it was intended to take every step necessary to reduce the army to normal establishment. But the great military caste was naturally opposed to this : if there are no more glories, promotions and gains to be acquired by conquest outside of Spain, they must be conquered in Spain. The military insurrection is born.

It was not difficult for them to secure the support of one of the great arms of the State, the aristocracy, and it was not difficult to incite some of the youth of the country to go to pit themselves against democracy in the ranks of the so-called Fascists, and the remainder of the monarchist elements expect to be able to obtain good fishing out of the turbulent water by their co-operation. With all these factors the Rebellion is in march opening perhaps the doors to the first revolution.

This revolution is being provoked by the military elements in rebellion against a conservative and capitalist regime, in seeking for another regime more conservative still. It is a rebellion of the privileged classes against the always oppressed Spanish people—not against what they call the rabble, but against those not of their caste—against the Spanish nation. It is perhaps the last phase of an agonizing struggle of revolt and counter-revolt before it passes on into history.

The result cannot be foretold with any certitude. The triumph of the Government, that is to say of the Nation, would put Spain in the first stages on the path of liberalism without the necessity of foreign extremes. The triumph of the military rebellion would bring the country first of all to a war amongst its own components and secondly to a state of anarchy, sabotage and vengeance, that in time perhaps would bring about an extreme socialist position, which is very far from the desires of the Spanish Nation at the present moment.

AMBROSE MARTIN

THE STRUGGLE IN SPAIN

“WHERE the land is thirsty, the peasant is hungry” is a Spanish saying, and one that cannot be forgotten in considering those forces of social conflict which are the background to the present war in Spain. How hungry masses of the rural workers are there, you need not travel through such arid regions as

La Mancha to discover. Even in the so-called "fertile" districts of Andalucia, rural unemployment, for which there has for long been no State benefit has been as widespread as in Estremadura.

When the first Republican Government fell, and a reactionary one followed in December, 1933, the Civil Guards were commissioned to break up much of the land gained by the peasants, and after the popular risings of October, 1934, the Land Statutes, which had promised agrarian reforms, were repealed. In some districts the large landowners even threatened to leave the land unsown, in order to starve the people. By November, 1935, wages had fallen in this rich country of Andalucia to an average of only 2 pesetas a day, lower than in the most crushing period of the monarchy even, when the average was 3 pesetas a day. Anyone who has lived in Spain knows how far 2 pesetas carries one. It meant in Irish money, just over a shilling a day for a 10-hour day. And Spanish farm workers generally have large families.

There are close on six million farm workers in Spain, and as many more people engaged in agriculture, and it is their problems which, at bottom, are behind the revolution. Because there is a revolution going on behind the revolt of the Army, an agrarian revolution which has been going on ever since the fall of the monarchy in 1931. The land distribution which the Institute of Agrarian Reform commenced in 1932 was too slow for the workers. On the proposed yearly average of settlement of 50,000 it would have taken 20 years to settle a million land workers. Actually, however, even this annual figure could not be achieved, since much of the Land Commissioners' work was hampered. And many of the landowners who still retained their estates were turning them into grazing ground, while the peasants in many cases paid feudal dues right up to the outbreak of the Civil War.

Edward Conze in his book *Spain To-day** has shown how

* Martin Secker & Warburg, 1936.

unequal is the distribution of land in Spain. "It is estimated," he says, "that one million owners own six million hectares, and one hundred thousand owners twelve million hectares. In other words, 95 per cent. of the undertakings have five million hectares, and 35 per cent. nine million hectares."

And there are half a million farms with only one hectare or less! When the Civil War broke out, there were multi-millionaires and there were unemployed rural workers who died of empty stomachs.

If the Christians, in their zeal to destroy every mark of the Moor, had only left the irrigation system, how different Spain's social history might have been. To the aridity of the soil, the peasant's low standard of living is largely due, and though land distribution has been extended by the Republican Government since the elections of February, 1936, the land varies considerably in character, so that many who have received grants remain little better off than before, since the production of crops is well-nigh impossible over large areas. True indeed that Spanish saying.

"But the Land Reform Statutes have done this much to help us," some peasants at Estepona told me recently, "they got rid of a lot of the Caziques." The Caziques are bailiffs who often acted with great harshness on the estates they managed for absentee landlords, banding themselves together against insurgent rural workers where the latter were not too hungry to rebel.

The Army Rising of July, 1936, which plunged the country into a Civil War, was a rebellion against the confiscation of the big estates which the mildly radical government was endeavouring to carry out—all too slowly for the farm toilers and land hungry peasants. The army officers are drawn almost exclusively from the class of landowners.

The Government's difficulties were considerable, for under the preceding administration of Lerroux, the leases were revised in large numbers of cases in favour of landowners, and resulted

in mass evictions. Agrarian troubles were then acute, and finally the land workers of a village near Madrid seized the land of a big estate, and their example was followed near Toledo.

But it was the farm workers in Estremadura who provided the spearhead of the revolutionary thrust through the land. Thousands of them round Cáceres and Badajoz seized the land, and—a fact of some significance—as the mass of the people were then on their side, a successful resistance was made when the Civil Guards descended on the peasants. In many cases, however, the Republican Government legalised these seizures.

The heavy rains in Spain made the spring of 1936 the wettest the country has had for sixty years. This added to the troubles of the rural workers. The battle-cry has been raised by the parties of the Right “For Spain and St. James,” but the background is bread.

Between Córdoba and Seville lies one of the chief bull-breeding districts in Spain. Looking at this region, one is reminded of Irish social problems. It might not be an overstatement to say that “Up the Republic” in Ireland, means at bottom what “el reparto” or “divide the land” does in Spain.

When I was travelling about the south of Spain a few weeks before the Civil War started, I was struck by the interest which so many of the workers showed in Ireland. During the shipping strike in Málaga, two of us went for a row out to sea with some boatmen. Finding that one of us was Irish, the men showed themselves avid for knowledge about Irish social questions. How many workers were engaged in new factories? How did regional differences affect the cost of living among the workers? What was the part played by Irish workers in British trade unions to-day? What was the average size of holding per small farmer in Ireland? The extent of the dockers’ and maritime workers’ union funds? The attitude of the workers in the North to the new social legislation in the South?

Alas, I had overlooked one thing. Blue Guides had been brought, but not Blue Books. And in my sincere endeavour

to find the right answers for these earnest sailormen, I suddenly noticed that they were steadily rowing out to Africa.

The disparity between wages earned by industrial and rural workers is nowhere more marked than in Spain (Miss Ellen Wilkinson's figures given in an article in *The Daily Herald* of July 18th* bear this out). But industrial workers were suffering acutely too before the Civil War. The commercial advantages to Spain derived from her neutrality in the last European war, which had increased her trade, had ended by 1929 when Spain shared in the world economic crisis. This fact, reacting on the already severe agrarian troubles, sharpened the sense of a working-class consciousness among both industrial and rural toilers. So that, when the miners of Asturia came out in 1934, they were supported by strikes in towns all over Spain.

As well as the land hunger, there is a sharp sense among the rural and industrial workers that educational reform is an immediate question. In Granada I went one evening to a night school for adults, conducted by some members of the F.A.I., or Federación Anarquista Iberica, the most extreme section of the anarchists. There can be few sights at the same time more pathetic and more inspiring than the picture of hard-working elderly women and aged men toilers, pouring laboriously over tattered books, wrestling with the alphabet, while an enthusiastic young comrade patiently goes over the letters with them. Ignacio, a good-looking young worker in a dark blue shirt, was taking a class; as he moved along the benches, eager with help, he looked a missionary if ever one did. He told me that this work was very necessary as there was more illiteracy in Spain than anywhere else in Europe. Before the fall of the monarchy, nearly half the population could neither read nor write.

"We were just making a start, when the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera threw everything back," he said. "Workers' books were destroyed and our papers confiscated—this happened

* "All's *not* quiet on the Spanish Front."

under Lerroux too. Now we have got to build up again."

In going about the South of Spain one cannot fail to be struck by the scarceness of schools. Every hamlet has its church, but some of the larger villages, even, lack a school. Several schools which I saw were ill-equipped and quite inadequate I should think, judging by their size relative to the village, for the needs of the population. And the teaching profession is among the worst paid of the State services.

Mention has been made of an anarchist organisation. The anarchists formed, at any rate till quite recently, the most important working-class organisation in Spain with their C.N.T., or National Confederation of Labour. I have not seen this important fact stated in any of the English papers : at the last popular elections, many of the anarchists made a great sacrifice for the United Front. They set aside their traditional principle of non-participation, and though they put up no candidates, great numbers of them voted for the Frente Popular.

More than anything else, this turned the scale against the parties of the Right. And as symbol of the solidarity of the workers (whose two chief Unions, the socialist U.G.T. and the anarchist C.N.T. had up to the outbreak of the Civil War been in deadly conflict) the communist sign of the hammer and sickle appeared in July on boards and posts, painted black, the colour of the anarchists. A good many people crossing the Spanish frontier in August must have noticed this.

The Anarchists' Confederation, with its libertarian philosophy, its rejection of coercion, of State power, indeed with its adherence to the fundamental meaning of the word anarchism, its peculiarly Spanish development of the ideas of Kropotkin, and its appeal not only to the regional character of Spain, but to the individualism of and the eternal rebel in the Spaniard, seems to offer little compromise with the dictatorship of the Communist Party, or with the directorship of the Communist International, which is the fate that many people see ahead for Spain when " Europe will go red at both ends."

But if the followers of Bakunin, who did so much to influence anarchist-syndicalism in Spain, win the day, then a new era may dawn for Spain—the only country which has a strong anarchist organisation—in which we may see put into practice, a system based on that which Dos Passos has called “the bright clear heartfelt philosophy of Latin anarchism.”

MAIRIN MITCHELL

WHAT I SAW IN SPAIN

It is one of those exquisite ironies, which now and then become over-tones of excited moments in Ireland, that I should find myself as practically the sole voice of Green Republicanism in Ireland supporting bourgeois democracy in Spain. And the irony is not lessened by the fact that Sean Murray, Harry Midgley, Sam Hazlett, Jack Dorricott and Peadar O'Donnell alone here so far acclaim Catholic Spain against the Moors and the Spanish Foreign Legion. In that picture of Badajoz with its Catholic 2,000 lined up for execution by the Moors and Legionaries, some of our principal Irish newspapers are publicists for the heathen, while this group of ours is for the Catholic masses to whose liberty these 2,000 sacrificed themselves in full gaze of the world.

I happened to be in the neighbourhood of Barcelona for a fortnight previous to the Fascist uprising, and as I had hoped to write a booklet on the changed agrarian situation since the triumph of the United Front last February, I was uncovering some of the conflicts not otherwise on view.

The situation when I left Barcelona on the Friday before the Rising was disturbing. There was much talk of a Fascist rising. The Spanish Foreign Legion was clearly won over to the Fascist. The officers' task here was easy for the Legionaries were easily stampeded by threat of a government enquiry into their atrocities in the Asturias in 1934. The landed monopoly was mightily disturbed by the curtailment of its power over

the lives of the peasantry. Quite substantial losses had been suffered by the "landed gentry," and there was the threat that actually they might be bought out at terms they would not like. For example, in certain fruit-growing areas the landlords return of 50 per cent. of the fruit was reduced to 25 per cent., and even this was mostly a purchasing rent.

The officers were drawn in large measure from this privileged class, and artillery and cavalry regiments especially were their perquisite. And it was within these officer cadres that the Fascist mutiny was hatched.

The time seemed opportune. There was evidence that the government was losing that enthusiastic backing on which it had arisen in February of this year. There was a big strike on the docks of Barcelona. A general strike was threatened on the railways. Workers were writing up on the sides of railway carriages and elsewhere, "Don't heed the threats of the Government." Such was the background as I saw it on the Friday.

But there was also evidence that the workers were not unaware of the dangers. For example, I was told on that Friday that many workers had been sitting up in their clubs every night since Tuesday to be in a position of readiness.

And yet in Barcelona the actual rising came as a surprise. In the small hours of Sunday morning the artillery took to the streets to get the sleeping city gripped. They arrived without incident at Place de Espagne. A detachment turned towards Sans. The alarm was raised as they entered a working-class quarter. Workers leaped to the attack. Barricades were hastily flung up. A short bloody fight followed. Soldiers who up till now had no clear idea what was afoot were guided by the attitude of the masses. They shot their officers and joined the people.

Around the Place de Catalonia, where the Fascist officers had by now more or less established themselves, a terrific street battle developed. While it was still in the balance the civil guard obeyed the government and took part with the workers.

This was the beginning of the end in Barcelona. Soon the military were besieged in their barracks. By Monday afternoon they had all surrendered.

News of what was afoot in Barcelona came to the outlying villages on Sunday forenoon over the radio. You heard a call for volunteers for blood transfusions. You heard chemists being ordered to keep their shops open and receive wounded. You heard an order that all shutters were to be open and that where this was not obeyed the Government forces would fire.

In such villages as Sitges, where I was, fishermen, railway workers, tradesmen, hotel waiters gathered and set to taking control of the town. They turned up at a hall with shot-guns, Brownings, old bull-dog revolvers, and a sprinkling of rifles. They commandeered all motor cars and ordered all known Fascists to stay indoors.

Here a church was sacked in full view of the Catholic population, which did not show any impulse to interfere, although the sacking was done at noon and those doing it were less than a score of unarmed youths. When word of a Fascist advance from Saragossa came, these people rushed to throw up barricades.

I asked the local committee to permit me travel with armed workers moving thro' the country between Sitges and Barcelona. My wife and I travelled in this way thro' a great many villages. Each village had its succession of barricades, mostly battles of straw; grand barricades. The enthusiasm was tremendous.

Once in Barcelona we got a general pass—I have it as a souvenir—so that we moved about freely. Little groups herded in hotels told the weirdest stories of atrocities which they assured us had taken place in the villages thro' which we had passed. People moving around got a good deal of amusement out of the lounge stories.

I talked with a great number of deported nuns. They must have got quite a thrill when they got the British and Irish press and saw how they had been stripped and paraded.

Actually they had only tame stories to tell of sorrowful expulsion, but courteous treatment.

There was no secret made in Barcelona of the fact that priests had been shot. Only just the explanation that nobody was shot, priest or layman, unless he was an active Fascist. How far scares sweep innocent people into undeserved suspicion must await cooler days.

The sight of Barcelona workers going off to free the people of Aragon from the Fascist tyranny so well established at Saragossa will remain one of the most inspiring sights I have ever seen. I recall especially one bus load of young men in their tram-workers uniform hurrying forward. And old men in editors' chairs ask us to believe that such men commit cowardly atrocities.

It is important that we all remember that the people of Spain rid themselves of the monarchy in a perfectly constitutional way in 1931. And that in 1936 they swept the Lerroux-Robles combine into obscurity in a free open election. And that it is against this democratic government that the foreign legion and the Moors are waging their war for "Christian ideals."

PEADAR O'DONNELL

SWIFT AND HIS IRELAND

A LECTURE

GREAT though Swift's fame has always been, so that many and many a writer of standing has handled his life and work, yet, wonderful to say, these are at the present time engaging the attention of scholars and men of letters more fruitfully than ever. I start then, with brief mention of valuable fresh work on Swift just done, or known to be even now in hands.

The volume of *Selected Writings of Swift*, from the Nonesuch Press (1934), edited by John Hayward, excellent from the standpoint of book-production, is marked by a high standard of scholarship. Since then, there has appeared (1935) the first properly critical edition of the *Drapier's Letters*, edited by Herbert Davis, a very fine work. Also Mr. Nichol Smith has brought out Swift's hitherto unpublished letters to Charles Ford. Then there is actually now in the press a work of much importance, the first authoritative edition of Swift's verse, fruit of several years' scholarly research by Mr. Harold Williams. Shane Leslie's book, entitled *The Script of Jonathan Swift* (1935), is closely related to Harold Williams's work, and shows the fascination of bibliography.

I pass now from the works to the life of Swift, to remark that it is not very long since Shane Leslie brought out a biographical study of him (1928); since when there is a new *Life* by Van Doren (1931), and one by Stephen Gwynn (1933), while most recent is that ambitious and heavy work called *Swift, or the Egotist*, by Rossi and Hone (1934), which I regret I cannot at all commend. Besides all this, we have two plays which imaginatively re-interpret episodes of Swift's life, Mr. Yeats's *The Words upon the Window-pane* (1934), and Lord Longford's *Yahoo* (1935).

As regards the man's life, it must be said that doom rests upon every single-track analysis of human complexity, and, accordingly, upon the work of those who would find an explana-

tion of everything in, for example, Swift's alleged "egotism." Yet I shall venture, for one moment, upon something similar myself, by indicating what is to me a guiding line of interpretation, in the great words of the epitaph which Swift composed for himself. Just as we here in Ireland must have specially before us his pamphlets upon Irish affairs, so, further, we here in Dublin will not fail to bear in mind that, apart from any such contributions to literature, through which the personality of Swift found expression, we ourselves possess two monuments, through which also his personality found expression, in that on the one hand he left his large fortune to endow a Dublin hospital for the relief of the mentally afflicted, and on the other hand he composed that famous Latin epitaph which is in St. Patrick's Cathedral: "Go your way, passer-by, and follow the example (if you will be able to) of this vigorous champion of liberty." It is easy to say that neither he nor any man is justified in holding himself up thus to posterity as an exemplar of virtue; I mention the point merely because I do feel always, and especially when I would defend him against detractors, the shortcomings of that great Dean's religion: its inadequacy affected his outlook and reactions adversely; but I will say no more about that. The epitaph, so grievously misunderstood, to his disfavour, by Thackeray a century ago and by some others even to-day, could in bitterest truth declare "furious indignation" to have "lacerated his heart." It did so too much, as I desire to explain. His career was marked by frustration, because he had always the feeling of having great powers, and yet being unable to accomplish things; the private element in it consisted in his having seen little men succeed, while he had failed to secure a position in which he could influence politics; but this personal grievance was enriched in his experience into a sense of the unworthiness of society, not because it ignored him, but because in his frustration was mirrored the common lot: everywhere he sees injustices to denounce.

I do believe that the bitter indignation lacerated his heart

too much for the reason that his sensibilities were acute to a psychopathic degree. My proof is this. The Earl of Clarendon, in his great History of the Rebellion, that is to say of the English Civil War, coming in his narrative to the Battle of Newbury, 1643, proceeded to celebrate in a wonderful encomium, lavishing upon it his great powers of oratorical prose, the memory of Lord Falkland, who fell, comparatively young, in that battle. Swift, in his copy of Clarendon, wrote as a marginal note, in pencil, at this point: "It moves grief in the highest excess." Lord Falkland ended an honourable life by an honourable death; and while rich promise, cut short prematurely, must ever bring to mind a sorrowful element in human affairs, yet such record ought not to move "grief in the highest excess" a century later! That excessive output of emotion is a pathological symptom—that way madness lies, because the bitterness which arises from the relative insensibility of others in grief-arousing situations may find expression in a savagery of ire that is insane; and if ever it does die down, as in Swift's case it did, the dying down may be into something like imbecility.

As I am venturing on fresh interpretation of what I feel to be in need of fresh interpretation, I must say one word about an offensive feature in Swift—occasional coarseness which is repulsive. Obscenity, or what has to be regarded as such, normally results from a lack of refinement (that eminent entertainer, Rabelais, is an outstanding example); but it sometimes results, by a strange reaction, from an over-refinement, the interest of which, in its excessiveness, is merely pathological. I should have difficulty about setting forth here my simple proof of this, derived from the case of D. H. Lawrence; if I could do so, I think it would be accepted that there is an over-sensibility which is psychopathic and tends towards ugliness. I mention this merely because the reader of Swift does get unpleasant shocks.

Swift was Irish not by ancestry, but by the accident of birth; which does not quite make him an Irishman. But the further accident of Irish domicile sufficed to do so. The society in

which he had his place, and in the injustices of which his bitterness had full scope, was Dublin society.

I go straight to his *Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from being a burden to their Parents or the Country*. The monstrosity of the obviously sarcastic, terribly ironic, suggestion that the slum children should be made use of for food, was no joke ; his heart was torn by the misery of the destitute in the back streets, and it was this that he was determined to bring before the public ; or was it not so ? When Swift says : “ I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and, therefore, very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children,” how is it that anyone can fail to see the grim sincerity of that social satire ! He says : “ Some persons of a discerning spirit are in great concern about the vast number of poor people who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain about the matter, because it is very well known that they are every day dying and rotting by cold and famine and filth and vermin as fast as can be reasonably expected.” My hearers do not fail to see that those words come straight from Swift’s heart ; but Thackeray was not the only man to make a fool of himself by picturing the Dean as an ogre deriving grim pleasure from the cannibal thought of gobbling up the children !

That short paper, the *Modest Proposal*, contains a mention of Swift’s practical remedies. They are such as these : “learning to love our country,” “quitting our animosities,” taxing those landlords who were absentees, and “using neither clothes nor household furniture except what is of our own growth and manufacture.” But he says people do not heed him. Hence the monstrous irony to shock them into attention. Society conceals the slum problem with a veil of decency ; all such veils Swift will strip off to declare that what was really indecent was the toleration of this misery. That is quite simple—quite elementary

as a line of interpretation; yet once you have it, you have the privilege of pouring the vials of your scorn upon the heads of some writers of eminence, even. There are no limits to the possibilities of misunderstanding human nature; what is required of us that we may get understanding is nothing more nor less than the emotional and imaginative entering into the human values of the situations before us.

In 1723, Swift spent a few months travelling in the south and west, observing the state of affairs outside Dublin. Writing five years later, recalling what he had seen of poverty and dirt, and the "barbarous" turning of arable land into pasture, he says: "My heart is too heavy to continue in irony." Here, again, he preaches economic self-sufficiency, basing it upon the voluntary expression of "love of our native country." Why should not rents and salaries be spent "in the country which produced them and not in another?"

An interest in Ireland's welfare was, for Swift, the criterion by which to judge of the virtue of a resident in this country. Thus it was that he wrote in the praise of Stella, after her death: "She loved Ireland much better than the generality of those who owe both their birth and riches to it." And, "she detested the tyranny and injustice of England in their treatment of this Kingdom."

Bishop Berkeley, following Swift, urged in like manner that the money made in the country should be kept in circulation in the country. The English, in their commercial interest, have almost destroyed the Irish export of wool; and this curse can be turned into a blessing, by making people devote their attention to forms of industry which will employ more labour than the raising of sheep. Create wants to increase consumption; "make it universal for the peasants to eat beef, and to wear shoes"; that will create industries. If the export of wool is hindered, so much the better; the wool ought to be used in the clothing of our people; we should export "only our superfluities"; and our beef, butter, and wool, are not superfluities in the

existing state of the country. Berkeley, as a Protestant Bishop, naturally finds himself addressing the upper-class Protestants ; but what he asks them is "whether a scheme for the welfare of this nation should not take in the whole inhabitants, and whether it be not a vain attempt to project the flourishing of our Protestant gentry exclusive of the bulk of the natives."

Another immediate follower of Swift was Dr. Samuel Madden, who published, in 1735, an appeal to the Irish landlords on behalf of the "unfashionable" doctrine of economic nationalism. "Every penny spent on foreign goods," he tells them, "is robbed from our people, is bread taken from hungry mouths." Madden was of English origin, unconnected with the Celtic tribe of Madden. He was full of practical schemes for social improvement, and helped to found the Dublin Society, our R.D.S.

The economic and political aspects of nationalism merge in the *Drapier's Letters*, which deal nominally with a limited and an economic problem—a question of the currency. That was not the real issue ; the real issue was that the arrangements for the Irish coinage were made in England, on the principle clearly stated in 1720 in an Act, which asserted that "the King's Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, had, hath, and by right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the Kingdom and people of Ireland." Swift's immediate response, before the year was out, had been the *Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture*, because he saw that the object of the Act was to secure that Ireland should continue to be exploited in the English commercial interest. The proof that it was so came soon in the grant, to an English speculator, of this patent for a debased coinage for Ireland. The Irish Parliament, colonial in origin, and unrepresentative, was being forced by the exigencies of economic and political circumstances, as represented by the Act aforesaid, and by Wood's patent, into a position in which, all its feebleness notwithstanding, its interests were the interests

of the whole country. Swift, for his part, rises to the conception of Irish unity, and launches the *Drapier's Letters*.

We are often offered false simplifications of the complex issues of our history. I have to offer a simplification which I trust will not be found false, in a thread of interpretation quite rudimentary, and yet quite controversial. I must go very wide, and be very superficial, if you like, in order now to depict these people's background.

Nationality is geographical in its basis. An island is a suitable area for its development, provided the island is of adequate size. On a small island you can only have development of insularity, of parochialism; though even there you may have cultural distinctiveness. You are more likely to find it on the Blasket Islands than on Lambay, for obvious reasons. That cultural development may be well worth preserving, provided it is not regarded as something to be copied on the mainland. But in a larger island you have opportunity, through the contingencies of history, for the mingling of different racial strains, with various conflicting interests, and a common ground; and that gives the basis of nationality. Because with all these conflicting interests, and the common ground—literally a *common ground*—there will tend to be cultural development which will belong to that geographical unit; and there will tend also to be economic differentiation. This will not, in itself, make interests cease to conflict; there are all sorts of conflicting interests in any community, there is competition in the national life; but along with that a tendency to unity that is wholly geographical in its basis and partly economic in its development, and which should also mean cultural distinctiveness. I say *partly* economic because I have in mind that it is partly a spiritual thing, in the sense that patriotism transcends material things of economics.

We know about Irish history. We know that the geographical situation rendered westward pressure ethnographically inevitable. We know about the attempts at conquest and at

colonisation in successive waves. What I want to say is that the main interests naturally set up thus are not two but three, and the utmost confusion of thought is occasioned by the popular attempt to resolve them into two. First, there is the English interest in keeping the half-attained control and extending it. Secondly, there is the conflicting interest of the point of view of the partially-subjugated earlier people. But the chief thing to keep always before one is that, thirdly, there is an interest in between the other two, which has many links with both, which roots itself in the soil, and identifies itself with the country; because it is out of this third interest that nationalism develops. The way that comes about is that the English interest is maintained by an English bureaucracy, which, finding the colonists to be developing their separate and Irish interest, identifies the colonists' interest with that of Ireland, and treats them, consequently, as being the Irish people who have got to be kept in subjection; which, of course, tends to make them into the Irish people. Thus there is the case of Molyneux, Member of Parliament for Trinity College, who had published a book arguing against Ireland being bound by Acts of Parliament passed in England. The English Parliament ordered the work to be burned by the common hangman: it was for the colonists that Molyneux was making a stand; and from the English point of view in the eighteenth-century narrowness of outlook, what he represented was nothing more, or less, than the Irish seditiousness.

The eighteenth-century notion of the motherland's relation to the colonies was to lead to the American Declaration of Independence; and here, half a century earlier, it was making Swift and others produce their Irish declaration of independence. It is a strange thing that Swift says: "Ireland is the only Kingdom that I ever heard or read of which was denied the liberty of exporting their native commodities and manufactures wherever they pleased. Yet this privilege by the superiority of mere power is refused us in the most momentous parts of

commerce. Besides the Act of Navigation, to which we never consented, pinned down upon us and rigorously executed." I do not know how Swift came to write thus, seeing that the situation was the same in America, where trade was, as it continued to be, controlled in the same way in the English interest, the Acts of Navigation grievously impeding progress. When it all came to a head, half a century later, in Boston's famous refusal to import English tea, their ground was precisely the same as that on which Swift, in 1720, urged Ireland to refuse English coal. Thus there was a trend, in the time of the *Drapier's Letters*, towards the unifying of Ireland, for, as Swift put it, "general calamities are the great uniters."

Swift has been concerned about destitution and degradation, the destitution economic, the degradation moral. All the privileged have their share of responsibility in relation to the destitution ; but both rich and poor can help towards amelioration by realising that they are jointly involved in the degradation which arises partly from political disabilities with the feeling of helplessness engendered by them. Swift will lead an attack on the political disabilities, while they all co-operate to lift the country out of the mire, through unitedly supporting industry, the extension of which will, incidentally, do away with the ghastly destitution, while the main object to be achieved is a moral uplifting. Such was the service which this great satirist desired to render.

W. F. TRENCH

PAIN OF INVASION

I, who have seen my land invaded,
seen the khaki rash spread over its lanes,
the armoured cars with their machine-guns swinging,
the reconnaissance planes over forest and bog ;

I, who have been met with challenge of sentry,
have seen the shot fired from his trembling hand
richottet over me, spattering to pieces on the walls,
and have been barred by sandbag palisado from my haunts ;

I, who have known the night-alarm,
sheltered the fugitive sniper from vengeance,
known what the feel is of a foreign trespasser,
laying his plan of power and enforcement on my land :

—I shiver and feel the pain of it on me—

It is the pain of having my own picture
of meadows and pasture, field ploughed
up to the cottage gable on the edge of the bog,
the leisurely donkey ride home in the evening
and the ramshackle country buses,

The birds and singing and the cackle of neighbours
leaving the pub in the evening, the trees
and the flowers and the inexpressible green of the leaves
blackened and disregarded, blinded, put out of my life.

DAVID QUINN

THE DANCERS

The kine are all home-going
Through the twilight-lighted leas,
And the long, long boats come lowing
From the green, green wandering seas.

And the meagre steeds, forever
Let loose 'mong fern and briar,
Down by the burning river
Drink red, red ribs of fire.

And the suns and moons keep beating
To the lilt of a magic lyre
While the earth, the earth is drugged and dead
In blood-red floods of fire.

THATCH

“Ní hé Lá na Gaoithe Lá na Scolb.” This well-known “nathan” or Gaelic saw suggests in regard to the thatched roof that the thatch must be secured before the stress of weather has an opportunity of testing its efficiency. The chance reading of the original proverb recently inspired the thought that at a time when the whole economic and material condition of this country is being overhauled, consideration of that branch of building which concerns itself with roofs and roofing materials might prove of interest. Have we a sufficiency of suitable roofing materials within this country? Are we using all the available materials? Are we unduly influenced by merely foreign fashions, without consideration of the relative merits of the materials; their relative cost; the incidence of this cost; not to speak of the artistic fitness?

The time will be well within the recollection of everyone when ninety-five per cent. of the permanent roofing materials in use in this country were imported. British and French natural slates; British, French and Belgian baked clay tiles; British and Belgian patent asbestos cement slates and sheets; and British corrugated iron sheets, roofed Irish buildings. The use of thatch and of native slates was definitely on the wane. If there was anyone to voice a protest at the irrationalism of the position, his voice was drowned by the scoffing of those whose interest lay in maintaining the policy, and, too frequently, of his own misguided countrymen.

The establishment of a native government has brought about a change. Native slates and artificial tiles have been substituted for most of the roofing materials previously imported. Whether these substituted materials are intrinsically perfect in their composition, or whether their appearance is wholly satisfying in an Irish landscape, are matters which could arouse much discussion. It is of some concern that native governments have not thought fit to encourage the use of the oldest and most indigenous of all Irish roofing materials—thatch.

In our thatched peasant dwellings we have preserved to some extent the only form of domestic architecture which is sought for by and of interest to visitors to this country. Apart from visitors, the whitewashed cottage and the thatched roof are the admiration of our own people. Search Ireland and few will be found for whom a thatched roof has not an instinctive appeal. In this material alone then, we have a tradition passed down

from the earliest times ; a material which excites unusual interest, which is native, and which is admittedly in harmony with any rural setting.

The neglect of thatch as a roof covering for the rural dwellings of Ireland, and its replacement by imported materials, is a comparatively recent development. Three-quarters of a century ago the common people of this island had just emerged from the period of the Penal Laws and the Famine, and were still under the heel of the Landlords. The vast majority of people outside the towns lived in thatched dwellings, though in some cases slated roofs had found favour with the class then known as the "gentry." Perhaps it was the associations of thatch with poverty, or the fallacious human tendency to ape the customs of those considered socially superior, that caused the reaction from the use of thatch. Perhaps the departure can all be explained quite rationally by the failure, from whatever cause, to grow the crop from which the best thatching material is obtained. Whatever the reason, thatch was to decline, and a British product, corrugated iron, was to take its place. One can hardly visualise visitors from lands with strong architectural traditions rhapsodizing about the picturesque old corrugated-iron roofed cottages of Ireland !

The material of the thatch varied greatly according to the district. In Donegal, for example, oaten straw—an inferior material—was almost invariably used in later days, as there was very little wheat grown in that country for the last hundred years. The best thatching material, however, in general use was thin wiry rye or wheaten straw, but in districts flax, rushes, reeds, sedges and *ciaplach* or *ciap dubh* (a hard, wiry grass, which grew in the bogs) were employed. Heather and broom are used in other countries. Of the native materials, flax was probably the most durable thatch, followed in merit by rye straw and wheaten straw. The rye straw lasts longer than wheaten and, in addition, being straighter and cleaner, less toil is entailed in preparing the straw for use.

Thatching was a rural occupation requiring skill as much as cobbling or carpentering. The trade is rapidly disappearing in this country, and while there are still a few of these skilled thatchers left, the work nowadays is frequently entrusted to a "handyman" thatcher, whose normal occupation frequently is farming or farm labouring, with the result, that the art has suffered, and the technique, skill and finish of the tradesman is often lacking in modern work in Ireland.

The art of thatching and its durability depends on the manner

in which the straw is cleaned, laid and secured. In good type work the straw is separated from the weeds and is well wetted to assist in the loosening of the flags and rubbish from the stems, as loose material of this kind not only decays quickly but also prevents the easy flow of water off the thatch. When the process is completed, the stems are straight and lie evenly together, ready to be bunched into small sheaves or "yealms" in readiness for laying. In the modern process of laying, the adjacent "yealms" are lapped together, and a compact and unbroken joint is made between the two. The eaves and verges are laid with a double thickness of straw, and the top of the roof is finished off by laying bundles of straw longitudinally along the ridge in sufficient thickness to form a substantial foundation for the crown of the thatch. The apex of the roof is covered in by placing the final row of yealms with their centre exactly across the top of the ridge with their ends bent down on either side and fixed with runners to the foundation. The surface of the straw should be gently beaten as it is laid to consolidate it into a fine mass, the surface being occasionally combed down with a hand rake to preserve a straight line from top to bottom and to keep each stem in its proper place.

A typical Donegal roof of 75 years ago was constructed in the following manner:—Where the gable walls were too far apart to support a strong ridge member, rough hewn trusses (termed *bac*) were formed to carry the roof. Purlins, roughly trimmed to shape, would be laid from truss to truss, and the purlins would be covered with wattles or branches, thickly scattered. Over these would be placed "scraws" or turves, which are thin parings of the top surface of virgin soil. These served the double purpose of stiffening and closing the roof and of giving a hold to the "scolb" which secured the thatch. Over the "scraws" the thatch was carefully laid and secured in place by the aforementioned "scolb," which was a briar twig, dressed and sharpened at each end. In districts the scolb was fashioned from willow or sally rods. It was driven through the scraws at both ends, leaving a loop outside which held the thatch. The thatch was placed with the tops of the straw close to the scraw, and the butts sticking out slantingly. It was usually laid 3-in. to 4-in. in thickness, dressed with a thatcher's knife, and the scolbs were often arranged by a proficient workman to make out a design on the thatch. A roof of this type would be expected to last about ten years without top dressing or renewal.

Where material for scolbs was not available, as happened

along the West coast of the country, the thatch was kept in position by means of sugans or ropes, and these were often secured in place by means of large stones tied to the ropes and allowed to hang over the eaves. This arrangement also helped to steady the roofs against the Atlantic gales.

The modern construction of thatched roofs varies but little from the foregoing description. On top of the ordinary rafters, laid with a minimum pitch of 45° , light sawn laths are laid horizontally and spiked to the rafters. Rafters and laths are covered with wheaten straw, cut in short bundles, to give a finished covering about 15-in. thick. The straw is sewn on with tarred twine to the laths, and only the ends are allowed to show on the exterior surface of the roof. The "runners" or ledgers or ornamental bands at ridges and eaves are formed with either twined straw spiked to the thatch covering with hazel spikes, or, alternatively, are formed with ash or hazel "heatherings" split in halves and fixed with buckles or spars (a kind of wooden hairpin) pushed into the thatch astride of the runners at intervals of about 12 inches.

There is no undue difficulty in rendering even a complicated roof weathertight, but a skilled thatcher will exercise care in the fixing of the thatch at hip, ridge and valley junctions, and at the chimney stacks. Modern construction would require that all roofs should be ceiled with plaster. A modern thatched roof would be expected to have a life of over 35 years and this life, can be renewed for almost an indefinite period by "half-coating" the roof, which consists of raking off all the loose and decayed straw and relaying with 4-in. to 6-in. thick of fresh material. It would weigh about 650 lbs. per "square" in comparison with a weight of about 900 lbs. per "square" for slating of average weight. In England, where the material for thatching is scarce, and the skilled labour difficult to obtain, the cost of thatch covering exceeds that of slates by about 50 per cent.

In modern times, where local building bye-laws are in existence, as is the case in a great number of towns and cities, thatch is prohibited for use within prescribed areas. Where the material is not specifically mentioned, as in the case of the Dublin regulations, for instance, the prohibition is enforced under the Public Health Acts, which prescribe that all building materials must be incombustible. The fire risk attaching to the use of thatch in densely populated areas is considered excessive. When the products of an inflammable character stored within a city area are taken into account, and when the number of potential sources of fire in a city are remembered,

the precaution of permitting only absolutely non-inflammable materials as roof coverings seems justifiable. The isolated churches, buildings, and dwellings, of the Irish countryside could not, however, be included in the same category. The relaxation under Section 25 of the British Housing and Town Planning Act, 1919, which permitted the erection of thatched houses in town and urban areas, subject to certain conditions, and provided that the consent of the Local Authority had first been obtained, and the extended use of thatch in parts of Great Britain in consequence, is a sign that its artistic value is recognised there, and that the attendant fire risk in set circumstances can be treated as negligible.

This liability to fire is frequently urged against the use of thatch for permanent work, but as it is probable that the objection emanates from sources whose interest lies in the employment of other forms of covering, it can be discounted. Although straw, in a dry state, is highly inflammable, yet it is comparatively rare to find a case of fire arising purely from the presence of thatch on the roof. From centuries of experience of at any rate isolated buildings in this country, we know there is little danger from the use of the material. Another argument raised against thatch is on the score of the cost of insurance against fire. This objection may be discounted, however, as it is stated that Lloyds will insure thatched brick or stone buildings, at a rate as low as that for the ordinary type of dwelling. It is a comparatively simple matter effectually to fireproof straw before it is laid. A solution of ammonia sulphate and carbonate, boracic acid and alum is one method in use, and the mixture either can be sprayed on to the roof, or the straw can be dipped in the solution before being laid. Other formulae in the form of paste are also in use and the paste is worked into the thatch as it is laid.

In addition to the alleged fire danger, people sometimes object to thatch on account of the harbourage which it is supposed to afford to birds and vermin. Birds can easily be excluded by fastening some wire netting along the eaves and verges, as these are the principal portions of the thatch which they attack. The question of the exclusion of rats is of more consequence, as they may cause a good deal of trouble owing to the destruction of the thatch when they burrow into the straw. It is claimed that a dressing of bi-chloride of mercury (corrosive sublimate) will be an effective protection against this, but the solution should be handled with very great care on account of its highly poisonous and corrosive nature.

The annoyance caused by the drippings from thatched roofs during rainy weather is a criticism sometimes levelled against the material. In the softness of the thatch lines, it is claimed, lies its principal attraction and this quality would be affected by the introduction of gutters. If the utilitarian features of buildings could be dispensed with merely on the grounds that they would interfere with the preparation of a suitable elevational treatment, the work of the architect would become simplicity itself. It is the work of a designer, however, to blend all essential units of his composition into a harmonious whole. Chimneys, for instance, are features which could seriously detract from the appearance of buildings, but in known examples, they have been so treated that they represent a distinct asset to the general design. And so it could be with the gutters for thatched structures. Utilitarian requirements often before have inspired the motives which have given distinction and character to buildings. The exceptionally wide eaves and the narrow balconies which extend across the facades of the peasant dwellings of South Germany and parts of Switzerland, used for the storage of ladders and farm implements, give individualism to these buildings. The improvisation of a suitable gutter and wall brackets could give additional character to the thatched structure, and might even afford protection to the most vulnerable part of the thatch.

It might even be possible to combine lime and straw in such a way as to give the aesthetic effect, while at the same time obviating the insect and fire criticism. An adaptation of the present reinforced plaster slab to form a backing for the straw in such a way as to form a homogeneous mass might solve many of the existing objections to thatch.

In its favour it may be said that thatch is an exceedingly charming material; that being comparatively light in weight it requires fewer and smaller timbers than do other materials; and being a good non-conductor, it keeps the roof-rooms warm in winter and cool in summer. It is essentially the material most in keeping with rural surroundings and has the merit that it can be procured within easy reach of the position in which it is to be used, thus saving transport costs. No expensive materials are required in conjunction with it to construct a substantial and weathertight roof. Further, thatching being a rural occupation the labour costs in connection with it should be low.

At the present juncture it is of considerable importance that something should be done to produce a revival of the use of

thatch. Now that a national programme of developing the resources of the country is being pushed ahead, why is not some consistency displayed? Why, in conjunction with a wheat-growing campaign should not a straw-using campaign be arranged? If it is national policy to grow wheat, it is surely national economy to conserve and utilise every particle of that growth. Is not the development of thatch as a by-product of the wheat crop of as much importance to this country as any of the by-products of, say, coal in a coal-producing country? The effective utilisation of any material which would otherwise be waste is a source of wealth which should show abnormally high profits. The material perforce must be cheap, and, consequently, its use must make for economy.

Further, when a wheat-growing campaign is being urged with the primary object of immediately benefiting the farming community, should it not be policy to arrange that they secure the maximum advantage from such programme? In connection with the housing programme now being pushed forward, farmers, as well as the population in small urban and village areas in their vicinity, are engaged in building new houses and remodelling old ones. A survey of these building operations will show that concrete tiles, if not more direct imports, are used as the principal roof covering. And, here we have the paradox of farmers purchasing material partially imported and still in an experimental stage in spite of the claims of manufacturers, when they have at their very doorsteps in thatch a material which is artistic, economic, and which has been proved efficient over centuries of use.

If it be suggested that it is retrogressive to revert to an out-of-date roofing material in a modern progressive Ireland, it can be answered that architectural styles are merely like women's fashions, they recur in cycles. Even her least friendly critics cannot deny that England is a progressive country, and yet we see indications of a more extended use of thatch there in recent times. Also in a country where native materials for the construction of permanent roofs are available in profusion and where, indeed, thatching material is very limited, what justification is there for the alleged retrogression? It seems obvious that the English, steeped in sound architectural tradition, are not just experimenting. They have come to realise the charm of thatch, and are prepared to pay the additional cost to secure the distinctiveness and attractiveness to be obtained in a building through the use of this covering.

But here in Ireland, where the conditions in regard to roofing

materials are reversed, we wilfully neglect the material which was once the envy of other artistic peoples. It may be a case of "familiarity breeding contempt" or a case of having to unlearn many doctrines preached to us for subversive purposes, but the sooner we fix on our standards of procedure with reference only to national progress, the sooner we will arrive at the goal at which all economically independent peoples aim.

No extravagant claims need be made for straw thatch. Its limitations are fully known. Its perfections are equally known. But in a period of national resurgence, when national resources must be husbanded to the utmost limit, a policy of using a well-tested native material would seem justified. It would not saddle the government at present in power with too large a measure of responsibility if it were required to experiment with thatch in the case of one or more of the rural housing schemes in contemplation, in which public funds are involved. The Irish people in this matter are themselves advocate, judge and jury.

CONOR MAC GINLEY

THE SACK OF MALLOW

(Excerpt from *On Another Man's Wound* which we are privileged to publish in advance.)

JERRY KIELEY and I were on our way to the hills beyond the Blackwater ; I was trying to get in time to a Council of the North Cork Brigade. We had walked for a long time across low hills where branches of purp'e dog wood and crimson fuchsia hedges stood out against pale corn stubble and yellow hazel leaves. We crunched mauve heather and smelt the fragrance of yellow furze and bog myrtle ; higher up were feathery green rowans behind their coral red berries. It was a clear, still day.

Jerry had fine features ; his face was brown under thick, black hair, which he carefully combed. He held his head to one side ; there was something bird-like in the look of his light brown eyes. He spoke rapidly ; he had a way with him that the girls as well as the boys liked ; he was good company around a fireside and could make up for my preoccupation with maps and pen. I could often hear his songs in the night time.

“ For I don't know it may be so,
But a bachelor is easy and he's free
For I've lots to look after
And I'm living all alone
And there's no one looking after me.”

We halted near a bank. I had heard a starling mimic a disgruntled sparrow, and then the clear whistle call of a black-bird ; as we watched him feed on purple elderberries, there was an orange, blue-green flash and a petulant screech as a kingfisher slipped into yellow flags amongst the reeds at the bottom of the slope. Jerry gripped my arm ; “ look, soldiers.” I saw two bits of khaki figures throw themselves down on the upper slope ; bullets whizzed as we crossed through the thorn bushes on the bank. We spread out ; rifle shots came from different directions ; I saw tin-hatted soldiers rush towards a hedge ; I used my Parabellum ; I heard the loud dull sound of Jerry's Winchester. He had moved further up the slope.

Through my glasses I saw glimpses of khaki above him on higher ground ; behind us was a rise of ground. I ran towards him ; “ they're outflanking us on the right, Jerry, get back to the rise and cover me,” I shouted. He ran back quickly with bent back ; I lay on the bank and fired rapidly towards where I had seen the outflanking soldiers. I reached the rise where

Jerry was. Heel to heel we angled our bodies and swivelled on the low aftergrass of the slope. There was a strong sweet smell from the clover.

We heard orders shouted from behind the bank we had left. A rush of men came over with bayonets shining on their rifles. From above us came the quick mingled beat of rapid fire. There was something deadly about the rush though none of them fired. I emptied two magazines. Jerry pulled back and forward at the piston magazine of the Winchester as the tin hats clumped together, yelling. Five of them dropped, the others wavered, then ran for the hedge. "That's fine, captain," said Jerry, as another fell shouting "Help." Jerry gave me my rank on important occasions. We were kneeling; I felt a great warmth in my body and a rich joy as I filled my magazines. I rammed one in with a click. Jerry's face was a glowing brown. There was a soft light under the skin as if it would flower, his black, shiny hair was tossed. The Winchester made the hell of a noise and the Parabellum sounded like a baby machine gun. Soldiers without rifles came through the blackthorns; they carried back five men, but the figure nearest us was spread out on his face. We heard the wounded cry in pain.

"My amm. is low, Jerry; be careful." Soldiers came down the upper slope, but they ran back again. "Let's charge up whilst we have any stuff left" I said. We rushed up, shouting; bullets pelted by us, then the firing stopped. We halted for breath beyond a low bank; a few yards away was a soldier. He was lying on his side and his hands were full of grass. "He's dead," said Jerry; one bullet had torn open his rifle magazine and had blown three fingers off his right hand. He took up the rifle. "Leave it," I said, "it's only a single shot now; we'll find another." We dashed down the far slope under fire.

We lay down behind a row of smooth beech boles. "You're wounded," Jerry said, "does it hurt?" Blood was dripping down my coat. I had been nicked under the eye by a bullet. Arms linked and content we walked across corn stubble. Jerry looked back; "I wish now I had taken that rifle," he said regretfully. There were two bullet holes in his haversack.

Liam Lynch had a high domed forehead; when he smiled I could see a row of large teeth; his face tightened quickly on his smile. He was quiet, but forceful and commanding. He tapped the table impatiently with his pencil at side issues and quickly worked through a long agenda. His eyes had large pupils, which grew blacker and larger when he stammered in anger. He had

a clear, well-organised mind. He made frequent notes in a loose leaf note-book as we talked. That night Liam told me about the capture of General Lucas. He had been with two officers on a fishing trip when Liam and his officers came upon them. Liam did not like to tie their arms. Lucas and Tyrrel, a staff officer, were in the back of one car guarded by Paddy Clancy, who stood up to face them. The officers spoke to each other quickly in Arabic, then Lucas made a drive for Clancy's gun and Tyrrel jumped on Liam, who was in the front of the car. Clancy was suffering from the effects of a hunger strike in gaol, but he fought off Lucas; Tyrrel twisted round Liam's Parabellum till its muzzle was against his chest, but the safety catch was on. Liam slipped it off, twisted the gun and shot Tyrrel through the neck. The other officer was left behind with his wounded companion and a car.

"It was a near thing," Liam said, "Tyrrel nearly crushed my hand as we twisted the gun every which way." The prisoner had seen a good deal of the country as he moved through North Cork to West Limerick, Clare, and back to East Limerick. "He must have learned a lot more about us than he should," I said.

The column or Active Service Unit—"A.S.U."—was developing in the South. East Limerick had organized the first column, but it had kept away from me. I had a bad reputation for working men too hard. The North Cork column of twenty-four men was drawn from battalion staffs; Liam had some brigade officers with him. I trained the column in field work for over three weeks as we moved around; at night the men attended lectures that I gave to officers of the battalion in which we were.

There was great rivalry between the squads. Nightly they held councils to discuss the day's training and the ground problems for the next day. In the morning squad commanders came to a column council where they made suggestions and interpreted the complaints and difficulties of their men; an action council to discuss operations was attended by the local battalion staff. In two weeks' time I felt that we could carry out attacks. Liam was worried; if we were surrounded and beaten or surprised at night the officers would be a great loss. Often an area depended on the personality of its commandant.

Paddy McCarthy, our quartermaster, was stocky; he had a rosy, eager face. His cap was at an angle on his thick hair. He was very good humoured; that was unusual for a Q.M., who had too many worries through excessive demands on his

small resources. He sang at unexpected times. He had a huge sack from which he could draw pencils, sticks of gelignite, a bull's eye card, a text book or cigarettes. A shortage of tobacco was hard on all of us except Liam. He drew out the articles with a surprised flourish. None of the men drank; drinking was discouraged by senior officers. They usually set the example. We had need to keep our wits clear and to avoid random talk.

Liam Lynch and I went off on foot to inspect the road from Mallow to Cork. Convoys passed along there frequently through a pass in the hills; armoured cars escorted lorries and two or three lorries often went together. We found two good positions. We looked at them from either side and from either end, and decided where we would place scouts, signallers and men. Whilst I was giving a lecture in a barn to officers that night, Liam was called outside. After the lecture he said: "The Mallow Commandant brought out a young lad named Bolster, but I thought I'd wait until you were finished. He's working in the military barracks and says he thinks it can be taken."

The boy was seated in the kitchen of the house where we two slept. Liam brought him into another room and closed the door; we sat down at a table. The boy was tall, serious looking, a little nervous at first, but by degrees the nervousness wore off. He had a strong Cork accent and was eager to speak. He spoke evenly; we both eyed him closely as he talked.

"Are you a volunteer?" Liam asked.

"No, sir, but I want to help in any way I can."

"What do you know about the barracks?"

"I am a painter and I work there with another chap, who will do anything you want him to; the arms are nearly all in the guardroom at certain times."

"How many men in the guardroom?"

"Four or five."

"How many sentries are there?"

"One inside the main gate during the daytime."

"How many officers?"

"One and a sergeant-major, the regiment is the Lancers, the 17th, they call themselves the 'Death or Glories,' and there are about forty or fifty men."

"Can you draw a rough plan?"

On a piece of paper he outlined buildings, sheds, the guardroom and the sentry. "In the morning time horses are taken out for exercise and about eight or nine men and the officer goes with them."

Liam asked him to come out next evening ; in the meantime he was to examine the guardroom without attracting attention.

" Well, what do you think of it ? " said Liam.

" It looks simple enough," I replied, " we could take the barracks in the morning time."

" Do you think Bolster can be trusted, perhaps it's a trap ? "

" He gave his information steadily. Two machine guns, thirty rifles are worth a risk. We often have men killed trying to capture a rifle."

Next day we went into Mallow, walked around the military barracks and the side streets and had a look at the police barracks. The difficulty would be to bring in the column in the morning. They would be noticed and the people of Mallow, long a garrison town, were not very friendly. The Town Hall stood high above the houses near it. " We could bring the men in at night and stay in the Town Hall till morning," I said.

" Yes, we could," said Liam ; we looked at the back walls leading up to the Town Hall, then we walked back to Burnfort. We decided to act at once, the garrisons might be strengthened at any moment or additional sentries might be posted. The plan was formed and reformed. Our quartermaster, McCarthy, would next morning go to the barracks as an overseer to superintend the work of the two painters. Each would carry a revolver. When the troopers left to exercise the horses, I would knock at the barracks' gate and say I had a letter for the officer. When I had disarmed the sentry, the other three who were to be working near the guardroom would hold up the guard and wait for the rest of the column. Motor cars and drivers were to be ready outside the town waiting to move in when signalled to by our scouts.

In the evening Bolster came out. Liam asked, " can another man go in with you to the barracks ? "

" Yes, he can come in with me in the morning, the lancers won't notice anything."

" Can you use a gun ? "

" No, nor can my pal ; we've never handled guns before."

He was shown how to load and unload, how to grip, then our plan was explained to him. We watched McCarthy and Bolster disappear into the darkness with three revolvers ; we hoped they would not be held up before they reached the town.

The column was drawn up. They smiled joyfully when they were told that we were going to seize the barracks. At two in the morning behind our scouts we moved into the town. The advance guard was told to make prisoners anyone they met

and blindfold them. There were no lights in the houses, no people on the streets. The men moved quietly and that was a comfort, each was part of the adventure. Our approach up to higher ground brought us through back yards, barbed wire and across high walls. We used ladders on the high walls. When I looked down on the houses I saw a toy town blurred and misty with half light and warm through changing shadow colour. The nerve straining to joy sense of danger increased until we were safe in the large Town Hall.

We had not disturbed the inhabitants or their dogs. Scattered throughout the rooms we lay on the floors and waited. For the first hour we were ready in position for a surprise attack. We might have been seen by someone who would report to the peelers or to the military. We're like the Greeks in the wooden horse, here in the belly of the town, I thought, and laughed. Dave Shinnock, the column adjutant, was with me in one of the front rooms as we peered out into the night through a window ; he asked me why I laughed and I whispered to him the end of the siege of Troy. Later I heard him whisper it to the men in an inner room, and when I passed through, a boy slapped the wall and said : " Now, girl, whoa girl, steady there," and made a wind purr with his mouth as if he were rubbing down a horse.

Then we waited, impatiently. At nine o'clock the horses were usually exercised. At ten o'clock a scout to say that the horses and riders had left the barracks. Riflemen were placed in position to cover the police barracks and the approaches to it and to hold up passing lorries, but we had few men for the work. Liam and I had already detailed off men and had questioned them until we felt they knew what they had to do. The work had to be done quickly and there could be no bungling, but we had to make allowances for excitement.

I pulled my trousers out over my long boots, placed a Parabellum automatic in the breast pocket of my coat and borrowed an overcoat, which I put on. Liam shook hands with me as I left by the back door. " I hope nothing goes wrong with the timing," he said, "or you will find yourself holding up the barracks alone." I walked up to the gate of the barracks. Paddy O'Brien from the column was some distance behind. I knocked. A face with a tin hat on its head peered out through the iron grating. " What do you want," said a voice.

" I've a letter for the officer commanding." He unbolted the door. I passed through. He closed it. He stood in a half on guard position, the bayonet of his rifle pointed at me. About fifteen yards away was a group of lancers, others stood around

the barracks yard. I held the letter in my left hand ; as he stretched out for it I bent down and put on the safety catch on his rifle so that he could not fire. I snatched the rifle from his hands, slipped off the safety catch and shouted " Put up your hands ! " He put them up quickly. I backed and opened the door ; our men rushed in. The guard room had been held up as soon as I had disarmed the sentry.

Motor cars drove in. Rapidly, rifles, revolvers, lances, swords, ammunition and equipment were carried out to them. As I with two other men, rushed for the officers' quarters, I heard a shot and saw a lancer fall, but I had no time to investigate. Upstairs we went to find the officers' room locked. With a smash three of us broke in the door. Inside was a soldier, the officer's orderly. We searched for papers but did not find many. Later we discovered a large tin box full, which was too heavy for us to carry. I sent down for two more men. On the officer's desk was an unfinished letter : " Mallow is a very quiet town, nothing ever happens here."

I saw motor cars move off, long lances stuck out and pennons waved. A wounded sergeant-major lay on the ground ; some of his men were trying to stop the blood whilst I bandaged his stomach wound. I heard Liam order all men to leave the barracks. " But it hasn't been properly searched yet," I said, " and it hasn't been burned."

" We have no time," he said, hurriedly. I tried to stop the flow of blood whilst the comrades of the dying man stood around. I heard a shout from the gate. Jerry Kieley, a rifle slung on his back, ran towards me.

" I came back," he said, " when I heard you were alone ; why didn't some of them stay ? "

" Let's move those bales into the building, I said. There were compressed hay bundles in the yard. We tugged them towards the main building, loosened them inside and set fire to the hay, then we dashed through the gate and down the town. We caught up with some of the rear guard, seated on an ass and cart, their rifles covered the road behind them. One was playing a melodeon. The thin swirl of smoke from the barracks did not increase.

Above Burnfort we halted. Thirty rifles, two Hotchkiss guns, small arms and over four thousand rounds of ammunition had been captured and had been brought by the motor cars to a safe place in the opposite direction. Sentries were thrown out while some of the men slept. Twelve miles away was Fermoy, with a strong enemy garrison of about fifteen hundred men.

Buttevant with its hutments and camps was eight miles away and was a battalion headquarters. We could expect a concentration of troops in and around Mallow. The Mallow Commandant sent off dispatch riders to mobilize some of the armed men in the battalion. After some time they came, poorly armed, mostly with shot guns, and reinforced our outposts.

"We must get away as soon as it gets dark," said Liam, "there will surely be a roundup, a big one, and they'll know that we've come in this direction."

Some of the column officers wanted to remain with me to help the local men defend the town against reprisal parties. "We must get away," Liam said, "the local men can easily avoid the roundup. We must get twenty-five or thirty miles away before morning." The Mallow Commandant received instructions. He said he would do his best to defend the town: "The Colonel from Buttevant has promised the parish priest and the minister that there won't be reprisals," he added.

"We cannot rely on such a promise," I said. Bolster and his friend Willis, were now members of the column. We started off in ponies and traps, strung out at intervals. We lifted the cars across trenches and through gaps where the roads were blocked with heavy, fallen trees. We hauled and pushed them across streams where the bridges had been smashed, we removed heaps of stones or networks of boulders strewn over a long stretch of road. We bumped over filled-in trenches and lurched into deep potholes: this battalion had done its work well. Enemy would find it difficult to penetrate. The rear guard had to put back the obstacles.

We halted from time to time on rising ground to look towards the town; at first we could see a faint haze, the lights of Mallow, then it dimmed as we moved on. Nothing had happened. Later we saw a dim glare; but as we watched it seemed to disappear. Could it be the town? The men would surely defend it. Some hours later we came to a high hill and as the ponies struggled on the bad road the men jumped out and ran up quickly. Away in the distance were flickers of light, separated by intervals of darkness. The flames leapt up as the wind increased. It was Mallow. "I hope to God it rains," said the Adjutant. Another pointed to a big glare in the centre. "What's that?" he said. "It must be the creamery; that means about three hundred out of work."

Bolster looked at the leaping stabs of flame, "I think it's

(Continued on page 55)

LETTER OF THE MONTH

RURAL LIFE ON THE CONTINENT

SENTIMENTAL writers in cities tell us how beautiful life is in the hallowed spots of rural Ireland and some choose to imply motives of vice and wickedness to out trek towards city lights. Anyhow, the dominant factor in the equation of a young countryman's life is the need for escape from a life of sameness and monotony. Mitchell's words that "an Irish peasant is born, suffers and then dies," are as full of truth to-day as they were in his time, and it is this glinting fact that forces the sinews of our nation to clutch and grasp at anything that offers a release to minds dangerous with the strength of energy. The cure for this cancer in the life of our people is not to be found in the administration of any soporific drugs, but rather in a thorough operation in the body politic and the removal of a system which relegates our producers to conditions of misery.

It is not my purpose, however, to write so much on this issue, but rather to contest the view, held by some people in this country, that rural life on the Continent is a model for Ireland. It may be that such protagonists have been to places where the basis of real contented agricultural life may be found or it may be that they have been taken around; but, anyhow, I have worked, or slaved if you like, in a fairly typical part of peasant domain in Europe, that region comprising the German-Holland frontier. For me there was no show or selective display—I claim to have lived the ordinary life of a Dutch or German peasant, and daily the conviction was forged deeper and stronger in my mind that we had a country people at home far and away on a higher plane if only they were freed from the reactionary system that strangles them. By contrast how vividly one realises the amazing loss of the potential wealth of high-mindedness, generosity and patriotism among our people simply because of the lack of Christianity that allows others to plunder the gains won from the sweat of honest men.

In these parts of Germany and Holland, the people possess farms of about twenty acres tilled to the maximum space. No boundaries between the plots, but each man has his area cultivated so that it carries all the essentials for a self-sufficing food provision. The crops are not nearly as rich in yield as those on our soils—the ground is brittle, and I should say rather poor, due, no doubt, to constant tillage. One horse or one ox, as the case might be, draws the plough, and the earth seems

to crumble almost of itself. Thrift is everywhere in evidence, not a single thing is wasted, vegetables and flowers are grown in places that we would not bother to touch. Here, indeed, are good headlines for the Irish farmer. But there is a limit. They start work in the fields at 7 o'clock in the morning at the very latest, and waste not a moment until late in the evening. We want no such long hours for our farmers. The latter are entitled to the same length of working day as their fellow-townsmen, and one finds it difficult to be patient with those who advocate differentiation.

The Dutch farmer goes home at the end of his day, eats a heavy meal, sometimes drinks a glass of light beer in the local café and then to bed. And so the world goes on for him for six days per week. Such a routine will have its backers in Ireland among those who manage to enjoy a large amount of leisure, reaped often from the sweat of those very peasants whom they condemn to a life of continual servitude ; whilst others, because of some warped mentality, believe that the average man improves in saintliness by monotonous work, brooding and sleep. These Dutch and Germans do not live in houses on their farms. They all reside in a village or dorp situated in the middle of a particular zone, and as these zones are rather numerous you have dorps situated about every five kilometres. Much could be said in favour of that communal idea of getting together in units from the point of view of social and cultural relations. As conducted, however, in those parts, I see little in favour of it and, on the whole, the model of the Irish countryside with the village as the nucleus and the individual houses scattered about appeals much more, provided, of course, that the people are given those intellectual amenities which they have been so long denied. The dwelling-houses in these dorps are better constructed than our farm houses ; but, as in every other thing associated with continental reputation, one must not be cajoled by any high-sounding talk about very superior housing. As a fact, I have known them to keep oxen and pigs in the apartment adjoining the kitchen and in one house in Holland before entering the kitchen, I had to pass through the residence of a fat sow reposing comfortably on her side. This, of course, is not to condone our smug acceptance of our own bad housing.

I saw very little sign of any intellectual life in these Dutch or German villages. Here was the ideal centre for a club where views might be exchanged and the higher pursuits of life touched upon by a people who would have a certain communal binding.

But no, and the reason lies in the fact that the individuality of the human being is crushed by this over-close association in living. An amorphous structure is developed in the organ of society with never a chance for any crystalline glint of brilliancy. There are much finer potentialities in our Irish countryside. Let the people have a hall, allow them the facilities for social and intellectual recreation, give them responsibility of control and direction and you will find that that natural genius, that irrepressible energy, will generate a current that will have a force strong enough to afford the Irish nation a higher stratum in civilisation than that claimed for the pastoral people of other countries. Village halls and classes would be far healthier and far manlier for the young people at night than have them peeping around corners and casting furtive and suspicious looks at their neighbours.

A thing I missed on the Continent was the sporting instinct of the Irish. They usually have a band in each dorp ; but, somehow, there is not that enthusiasm and abandonment about their sport. In some places you may have a football team ; but you could not visualise the glorious excitement associated with the fortunes of an Irish hurling team. At a match spontaneous fervour and anxiety was replaced by ordered and methodical judgment. Such people may make a material success of life ; but, somehow, abroad one sighs for the reckless dare-devil Irishman. Perhaps the Continental mentality is wiser, they certainly will not lose any money ; but they would never breed the type that lightly shoulders sacrifice. I remember getting a great shock when I observed that every one of those people possessed a small purse. Big or small, no matter what amount of money was in question, a purse was produced. On the other hand, however, there was an entire absence of the "gombeen man." As far as I could ascertain there was a system of co-operative marketing in operation which seemed to work exceedingly well. Here we could copy a headline, but always with a certain amount of reservation, and, anyhow, had we not Guilds in Ireland before the Dutch or the Germans, so why pretend that we must go abroad for something that we possessed ourselves not so very long ago. A custom there was the holding of a kiormas once a year in every dorp. This event usually lasted about three days and consisted of dancing, riding hobby horses, swing boats, and such things as we might have at a local circus. One of the main functions at those events seemed to be the drinking of light beer.

Across the border in Germany the actual mode of living was

somewhat similar, the working hours, the type of labour, the gathering into cafés, all having the same characteristics. But I disliked their Hitlermania : enter a German café, after a while in comes a storm trooper, everybody shoots up his hand as he salutes "Heil Hitler," and now good weather is known as "Hitler-weather." In every humble home his picture rests. Storm troopers swarm about on bicycles, and judging by the different uniforms displayed there must be quite a variety of species. People who visit Germany as tourists tell you that they liked it—I visited it as a worker from Holland and saw it from that view point. To any lover of freedom, to anyone who believes in something more than mere materialism, the place is an abomination. They say that they have national freedom and democratic freedom at that. Perhaps so, but I could not visualise a Connolly or a Mellows doing anything but rebelling against the philosophy of life that rules Germany or, more correctly, Naziland.

Yet these young men are full of vigour and life. They work long hours, and in the summer evenings they cycle about proudly sporting their Storm Trooper uniforms. Their standard of living I should say is not as high as that of the Dutchman across the border, in so far as food is concerned, at any rate. It is strange, too, for an Irishman to find such a lack of fraternal relation or association between these two peoples. You rarely find them crossing the border. We presented our passports to the German Guard at the frontier and had to submit to the scrutiny of our belongings even though we were well known as the Irishmen "from England." In everyone of these frontier stations a map was displayed showing the various nations and illustrations of the relative war strengths of each. Large man-power and huge quantities of war resources were attributed to countries like France, Russia, Italy and England, whilst in the middle of the German map was depicted one lone solitary soldier with a rifle ! One naturally asks what is the attitude of the peasant mind towards war. Well, Nazi philosophy does not admit of much attitudinizing on the part of such people ; but one thing was clear, that they had no doubt about the march of Germany into future battle. I can picture them drinking beer in their cafés and toasting the march into Rhineland. They hated France chiefly, I should say, from the pain of past defeat and humiliation. Strange how they dissociated England from the role of enemy in the Great War—everywhere there was a feeling of respect and amiability towards England. Whether this friendship was part of the carefully prepared catechism of

Nazi teaching I do not know ; but considering that the sole source of news for those people was strictly censored, German newspapers and Nazi broadcasts on the radio, it was hard to sense what might be the real thoughts of the people. Speaking of this absolute State control of news it was rather amusing to read of some event that occurred in Germany about fifty miles from our frontier, in the Dutch newspapers whilst the inhabitants across the border were entirely ignorant of what had happened in their own country. Some of those people were very keen on getting Dutch newspapers ; but, then, the penalties were very severe, and an internment camp provides no alluring prospects.

Questions with regard to Ireland usually brought forth hazy indeterminate comments. Yes, they had heard that Ireland did something during the great war, but of details they knew nothing. Casement—no, never heard of him. In fact, those people had no place for anything hostile to England. Let Irishmen make no mistake—as far as the peasant mind goes in Europe, and I have experience of associating with them in Germany, Holland and France, Ireland would be just a pawn where England's friendship or enmity would be concerned. The place for Ireland's battle is in Ireland, and Continental liaisons will not advance Ireland's nationhood.

Have we much to learn from the study of social, economic and cultural conditions of peasant life in these countries? For answer I will briefly summarise the salient characteristics :

- (1) The thorough utilisation of the land for the provision of food for the people.
- (2) The amazing grasp of the power of organisation that was revealed in Germany.
- (3) The concentration on physical fitness amongst the Germans.

That was all. The structure and orientation of the social system as a model for Ireland made no appeal to me. If we cannot introduce any spiritual basis for the control of relations between Irishmen, then let us keep to our present rather pseudo-Christian system—anyhow, it is just as good as the materialistic philosophy of the Dutch and German peasants. The Nazi peasant has crumbled before the regimentation of mind; let us take care that we do not start modelling our rural life on their system as we will surely fall before that destroying force—the bureaucratisation of thought, which will deprive us of our national consciousness and leave the real forces of the country an easy prey to the many veiled but sinister influences that beset a nation in its struggles.

P. P. O'DONOVAN

ART

PICTURES AT THE HORSE SHOW

The very astute comments by Eamonn O Gallchobhair on musical criticism in the last issue of IRELAND TO-DAY apply with equal force to every artistic activity. The critic must be painfully aware that he has an ideal standard, often in advance of local performance. His duty, however, would seem to be to maintain that standard, since if the critic has any useful function, which is highly debatable, it must be to set a head-line. In this small country while there is no danger of being found stabbed with a palette knife or poisoned by a stealthy inunction of white lead, considerable moral courage is required to deal honestly with the efforts of craftsmen who love their craft and have to live by it. It is with relief, therefore, that we turn to the exhibition of students' work at the Horse Show, where the most savage or patronising critic can hardly be harmful and may even be helpful.

The competitions for the Taylor Scholarships and Prizes are always interesting as since their establishment they have been held by nearly every Irish artist of note. The scholarship for a figure painting entitled "Motley" attracted about eighteen competitors of whom only three were men, a pregnant commentary on the economics of art, and the prize was awarded to Miss A. Hanna for an *ism*, that is, for a picture which was plainly intended to illustrate a theory. In making this award the adjudicators have again given assent to a principle and future competitors will know that it pays to be advanced, modern.

Miss Hanna's was not the only, and was far from the most obvious *ism* competing. There were others after the outlandish manner of Lady Glenavy whose conception of the world she lives in is that it is made of wool and that everything solid is cylindrical. In Lady Glenavy's pictures woolly shepherds (advanced cases of goitre) attitudinise beneath a woolly tree, like Teddy-bears on a nursery frieze, and the eye instinctively searches everywhere for a zip fastener. These mock Arcadias have been exhibited regularly in the Academy, and might be accorded the charity of silence if they did not prove to be influencing impressionable students. One's amazement that these absurdities, which can hardly be seriously meant, should attract imitators is modified on opening the rules of the Taylor Bequest, to find that Lady Glenavy, A.R.H.A., is one of the judges and is nominated by the Academy. It is difficult to apportion the blame.

To return to Miss Hanna. Her work has considerable merit and may even have promise. Her technical skill in handling paint easily surpasses that of the other competitors, and she employs colour with a wise—too wise—restraint. Her drawing is excellent, but affectedly two-dimensional. In such a competition one would imagine the desirable quality to be a dogged wrestling with the problems of art rather than an adroit side-stepping of them. Miss Hanna achieved a desirable unity in her composition by a rather studied reduction of the scale of tone, thus eliminating a difficulty which others faced with

varying success. The resultant uniformity made the distribution and balance of her design comparatively simple, particularly as the composition was a crowded one, but the element of surprise is lacking, and a picture analyst might resolve the pattern into equal masses of equal tone equally distributed over the canvas. "Spotly" would have been as informing a title as "Motley." In short, Miss Hanna, with all her talents, has already intellectualised her art and has put into practice so many theories that there is no emotion left and the result is a cold formula.

The less important prize for unprescribed work was awarded to Miss Elizabeth Mackay for "The Flower Girl," a picture miles beyond any other in that class; a sound, straight, honest job of work.

The valuable Henry Higgins Scholarship was awarded to Mr. Campbell, a sculptor with a really remarkable command of his tools and materials, but apparently also slightly tainted with an ism which requires a book of words. The two principal awards, therefore, have this in common, and sophistication seems to be the last quality one would wish to encourage in a student, however advanced. They may find the way a long one if they propose to begin at what they now imagine to be the goal.

If one may be flippant, (to soften the ex-cathedra manner which may be justified in dealing with students) one might say that the only ism in art which is not doomed to be a *wasm* is realism. This confession of faith, in a world of artistic agnosticism, is made with some trepidation, tempered by a comforting assurance of the elasticity of the term. Art is only the artist's visual experience captured and conveyed. If he fails to convey it, that is both his and our misfortune. If he essays to convey something he has not experienced, then he is a liar. The timidity of modern art criticism can be traced to the Impressionists. When they began to apply their theories of colour and light, supported by physical discoveries concerning the solar spectrum, they were universally howled down. They survived and their critics had to suffer the humiliation of admitting their blindness. Later with the pointillists, with Manet, Cezanne, Van Gogh and others, much the same thing happened, completely destroying the critics' trust in their own taste and judgment, and teaching them that the only certain thing was that art is always changing, finding "a new form," "a new idiom." Consequently the numerous isms of this century, beginning with the farce of cubism, were hailed by apparently reputable critics with applause, and standards vanished.

What neither they nor the *ists* themselves realised was that every change affecting art, from Ucello's perspective to Monet's violet complex, was prompted by a striving for verisimilitude and nothing more, and was as much mathematical as aesthetic. Giotto was a realist no less than Ucello, though he knew little about perspective. When the Impressionists began their experiments with light and colour, they, too, were realists, and for a while it seemed as if the artist had secured possession of the full visual facts, both in form and colour. Manet was a realist and never abandoned for one moment—in spite of his

oriental proclivities—the content of European knowledge which was his inheritance. Cezanne was a realist, but he is the guilty party, and from him the isms sprang. Because although he may have been right about the inadequacy of the traditional means of representation, his eye could not tell him (as Ucello's eyes told Ucello) what was missing. Unable to discover, he was driven to invent. Believing, for instance, that the third dimension was not fully expressed by perspective, he employed distortion of both form and colour to secure what he felt to be lacking. His methods were not supported by any physical truth, but his sincerity was obvious and quackery misconstrued his example and followed it. The critics were merely dragged along, as they have always been, in the wake of the more adventurous artists.

Cezanne might just as easily have argued that an image is received inverted by the retina of the eye and is turned upright again by the brain, and that therefore the proper way to paint pictures is upside down, and the only way to appreciate them is by standing on one's head. Or he might have argued that as the eye is convex, the only way to draw is on a concave surface (in a circular frame !). In fact a light breaks on me. Why has no one thought of that before? A new ism. Concavism. All rights reserved. And there will be only one master.

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART

The School of Art is dead. Whatever hopes may have been entertained that the present Government might prove sympathetic to the Fine Arts may now be abandoned. The suspicion with which IRELAND TO-DAY regarded the reorganisation of the School has been fully justified. The Department of Education has invited applications for five positions in the "National College of Art." They are: Professorships in Painting and Sculpture, at £350 a year; Assistantships in the same at £200 a year, all "part time" and non-pensionable and a full-time pensionable Professorship of Design in Industry, rising to £600 a year with cost-of-living bonus.

Teaching is recognised as the most exacting of professions, and the teaching of art is the most arduous and exacting of all. The nervous energy, the enthusiasm and the mere bodily labour expended by teachers in the Metropolitan School of Art can hardly be exaggerated. Primary teachers work about twenty-four hours a week and never after three o'clock. University Professors work as little as eight hours a week, for a £1,000 a year, and they get five months' holidays. These are accepted as full-time employments. But from fifteen to twenty hours' teaching a week for ten months is evidently regarded (by the toilers of the Civil Service) to be part-time employment for an artist, enabling the teacher to undertake, in his leisure, work which will be remunerative to himself and creditable to the country.

The economic condition of our artists is already the shame of the Irish people, and this is a cruel and callous attempt to take advantage of their already

miserable condition in order to further degrade them. The best of our artists—presumably we demand the best—are to be offered the wages of an unskilled labourer. Reputable artists may be forced, by economic duress, to undertake the Professorships; the Assistantships can only be expected to attract boys who have not yet learned to model or to draw, or, more likely still, smart girls anxious for a little pin-money.

The comparatively magnificent salary and security offered to the Professor of Design in Industry means that the "College" is intended to be a factor in the industrial revival. But it means more, and the reasoning is clear. Ireland has no industries, therefore no designers, therefore a teacher of Design must be imported, therefore a living wage must be offered since we dare not offer a foreigner what must satisfy an Irishman. This interpretation of the situation may be wrong, but, to be on the safe side, IRELAND TO-DAY indignantly protests against such a possible insult to Irish artists. This is truly the first generation of Irish artists, the first infused by an Irish consciousness, and we should be both proud of them and grateful for them.

Obviously some childish notion exists among the "reorganisers" that design is something different from art, something mysterious which is known elsewhere but not here. If this be so, and if the designing of a carpet is a mystery involving special knowledge or a special artistic sense, then the designing of a cup must demand another kind of knowledge and a different artistic sense. We rarely see (even in Ireland) a jug designed like a mug or a book-case designed in the manner of Limerick lace. Where does the Department of Education hope to find that omniscient who is familiar with the mysteries of design applied to pottery, glass, furniture, clothing, textiles, lace, wallpaper, metals, stone, etc., etc.? If a knowledge of technical processes is necessary for industrial design, it is quite plain that no mere mortal can ever achieve it. And no one ever has. If the reorganisers still cling to that belief, it would be safer to send an Irish artist to study these processes than to employ a foreigner who claims to have done it. It seems quite normal to send commissions all over the world to learn how to sell apples, milk cows, grow beet, cut turf or conduct hospitals. And if an Irish artist were sent abroad to study design, at least we would be sure that he knew a great deal about it, before he started.

JOHN DOWLING

THE SACK OF MALLOW—*continued from page 46*

the Town Hall." There was silence for a time as we watched, helpless. The sheltering belly of our horse had paid for harbouring us.

"Damn it, it's terrible," said Liam, "to think of the women and children in there and the tans or soldiers sprawling around drunk, setting fire to the houses." The enemy had revenged the capture of the barracks on the townspeople. Our elation at success ebbed away; we felt cowardly and miserable; in silence we journeyed on amongst the hills.

ERNEST O'MALLEY

MUSIC

ATAVISM

READING various articles on the future of Irish music, I have been struck by the recurrence of the word "atavism", the peculiar thing about its use in all these articles being that always the word is used in what Fluther would call a "derogatory" sense. I am not at all convinced of the justice of this implied stigma.

My dictionary gives the meaning of the word atavism as "resemblance to an ancestor." Were we discussing problems of life or ethics the stigmatizing as unworthy of such resemblance might be easily disposed of, but, such a problem in aesthetics is more subtle and a solution that will be at all satisfactory much more difficult of attainment.

I suppose one of the most striking things about Irish literature and the thought as expressed therein, is the persistence of a set of values that may, I think, be truly called traditional. As examples of such persistence one thinks of Pearse's

"MÓR MO GLÓR

MÉ DO RUIG CUCULLAIN CRÓDA,"

or the plea of Áine Deán Uí Néill, at her death

"AN CREILL IS BINN LEM CLUASA, A CRÍOST,

SO RAIB AGAM !

SIN PLAÓISC A'S BLAÓDM NA NGUNNA DCRÉAN

AG COSAINT CIRTE

NÓ GLÓR NA SCLARDEAN CADAIRT BÉIM AR BÉIM

AG SCRÍOSAD UILE."

These are but two examples that come instantly to my mind ; lack of space precludes any further quotations, but these are unnecessary, I think, since examples exist on every hand and not only in Irish but in Anglo-Irish literature also. Perhaps what I am trying to say about our literature has been best said by Rolleston in a certain criticism. He says "With Mr. Yeats, however, the gods and heroes are no longer far off—they are here among us, forms more real than living man.' They are even so melted into the imagination of the poet, that they emerge from it, not as 'symbols' of ideas (as the phrases of modern mysticism have it) but the very ideas themselves. Niamh and Caoilte and Cleena of the Wave are no mere symbols, no devices of the intellect to represent the unintelligible—they have an intensity of spiritual life comparable only to that which, in effect, beings of the same order possess in ancient Irish myth."

Now, if atavism means anything and if it is a stigma, then, I am afraid that Mr. Yeats must stand impeached ; for not alone is there a pronounced resemblance to ancestral work and thought in his art, but he has glorified his iniquity. In Mr. Rolleston's criticism the important words, to me, are "an intensity of spiritual life," which can only mean that Mr. Yeats has re-stated a certain set of values which are integral to the Irish mind—the beings he puts before us being "more real than living man."

The persistence of a traditional set of values is not confined to literature. Those interested in the future of Irish architecture, will be deeply interested in the new "Four Masters" Church recently built in Donegal. In its lines the design is as old as Cormac's Chapel—so old that it is new. While revelling in the results of architectural atavism the discerning eye will see that the various problems in this building have been treated with true artistic sincerity.

And this exordium leads me to the profound statement that "there is nothing new under the sun" and particularly so in the deepest depths of human thought, among the dim roots of things where art is nourished. I think the sensitive mind in Ireland to-day is still influenced by the same things and in the same way as was the sensitive mind in Ireland long ago. We have still the same delicate skies, the same intensity of colour, the same moaning seas; we still hear

"The croon of summer seas

And the wind's laughter in the upland wheat ;"

we still resent most bitterly any injustice, still rebel for the human principle against the formula, still follow and worship our heroes and keep the past for pride. And while our intensity in these things may vary from generation to generation, yet, I think, under the variations lies one fundamental principle.

It is strange, perhaps, that in such an evanescent, unsubstantial thing as music this informing principle should show most clearly. Probably it is because music is fundamentally closer to the mind than words or material; the various veils that hinder the clear presentation of thought are most diaphanous when thought is presented musically. And that set of values which makes the Irish mind different looks out at us clearly from our old music—its idiom being in some subtle way the idiom of the Irish mind. Its rhythms, its intervals, its speeds, its build have not been chosen arbitrarily, but are what they are because they are the musical expression, the musical equivalent of Irish thought and its modes. And this matter might remain a mere subject for academic discussion but for one thing—that, as I believe, the various qualities of this old music still express the variety and essence of our thoughts; that it is still the musical equivalent of thought in this land where

To fail is more than to triumph

And victory less than defeat.

If anyone should doubt such a statement let him gather a small audience and play for them a "modern" arrangement of an Irish air—an arrangement where, let us say, a harmonic scheme is superimposed upon the tune rather than slipped quietly underneath it. (I am trying to say a rather difficult thing, but I think most people will understand what I mean.) However, as I say, let the doubting one play this arrangement and note the reactions of the listeners to his performance. I think he will find that people will reject the arrangement as something spurious; will say to him, as has often been said to myself, when a member of an audience listening to such arrangements, "They are very nice tunes, but there is something wrong with the accompaniment." That, of

course, is the untutored man's way of expressing his thought ; but I think too that the listener who has a respect for fine design will also reject such an arrangement ; for he is really uninterested in what the poet has called " soulless self-reflections of man's skill." He is interested in the design to be presented and only as an afterthought does he think of the arrangement ; the latter is to him but the vehicle for the presentation of the design. He is not much interested in either cart, horse or driver ; he is interested in what is within the cart for delivery.

I am trying to say that for the Irishman, the Irish idiom expresses deep things that have not been expressed by Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Elgar or Sibelius—by any of the great composers ; and that where the vehicle used for the presentation of the Irish idiom is the vehicle of any of these men or their schools—then the Irishman is conscious of a clash of values, a struggle for mastery and he rejects the presentation as " wrong."

And so I say that in no Irish art as much as in music does the Irish mind hold fast to the set of values fundamentally its own ; and in no other art is the mind so conscious of the continued integrity of those values.

And this is why I have said that the stigma implied by many writers using the word " atavism " is not quite fair. Novelty in art is mere vulgarity, and a new thing is strong only when it has deep roots in the past. If a new music arise to express Ireland it can have as its root only the fundamental sense of values that belongs to the Irish mind, and it is conceivable that a great strength will lie in its atavism.

EAMONN O GALLCHOBHAIR

AN IRISH BALLET

An interesting experiment has been started within the past six months by which the city that once applauded Maria Taglioni and other outstanding ballerinas of the last century now secures a native school of ballet.

The Theatre School of Dance and Mime which has just been opened is the first school where the National Irish Dance tradition is being made an important study in association with the classical ballet technique, laying the foundations for a new and Irish choreography. Miss Sara Payne, the director of the school, has had a great deal of practical experience in the theatre, as dancer, actress and choreographer, and is well fitted for the difficult task she has undertaken, as the mime study she presented at the recent W.I.D.A. Horse Show Week Ceilidhe demonstrated. She has been fortunate in securing the services of the well known exponent of Irish dancing, Mr. George W. Leonard, who directs the study of Irish dancing for the school.

In addition to her own students, Miss Payne is teaching the Abbey Theatre School of Acting, who come to her once a week for instruction in Mime and movement.

C. A. G.

THEATRE

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE ABBEY THEATRE

PRIOR to last year's changes in the Abbey Theatre, a subject of frequent conversation in Dublin was the suggested assassination of one of the directors in order to focus public attention on the state of the theatre and to induce in the survivors a greater sense of their responsibility to the arts. It was a very pleasant game, and it provided much amusement; no doubt that was why it was so widespread. The introduction of the subject, whether in a drawingroom or in a publichouse or beneath a lamp at the edge of the street, assured always anticipatory smiles and a loosening of the belt of enjoyment. As the essence of the game was the picking of that director whose death would be the most profitable to drama, a general massacre was rarely advocated except by sullen playwrights, and no attention was paid to them because the literary prefer mockery to anger, and in any case it would have spoiled the game.

With our confined Irish humour battles were fought in which this or that director was defended from the imaginary bloodthirst of an opponent. One might be defended on the ground of his services to letters, another because of his personal beauty or for some mannerism which had endeared him to his protagonist, or again, for some reason so entirely irrelevant that its very ridiculousness was its recommendation. This was the outrageous game played in 1934 wherever the literary and the shadow-literary gathered. I mention it because it is amusing, because the game has recently been revived and is being played with greater zest (for have not additional directors increased the possible subjects?), and because it is an indication of certain things: the general contempt in which the Abbey Theatre is held, our inclination to talk rather than to act, and a certain fierce personal indignation which is surprisingly widespread.

Before considering the reasons for this general contempt it is well that one point should be made clear. If the Directorate of the Theatre imagines that an improvement has been effected since the advent of new directors twelve months ago, the sooner that foolish idea is put out of its head the better. There has been no material advance. The lighting is still appallingly bad, the settings unsatisfactory when not depressing, the actors as incapable as ever of coping with anything other than the whining drama of the bogs. The speaking of verse is still a torture to the ear as was demonstrated recently by the production of "The Shadowy Waters." Most discouraging of all is the indignant British righteousness of individual directors who, when fault is found, assert with a magnificent simplicity that the contrary is the case, that the work done is good; and who appear to regard as a blasphemer any critic however patently honest he may be. This is really what is wrong with the Abbey; the fault lies with the head. It is foolish and woolly-brained and does not know at all how the wayward limbs should be controlled.

The foundation of an Irish drama was a considerable achievement in as

much as grass was made grow where there had been none before. But it is important that with the humility proper to a Christian people we should keep constantly before our eyes the fact that Ireland's contribution to world drama is negligible. The type of theatrical representation peculiar to Mr. Yeats, beautiful as it is, has influenced no dramatist in any country. We hear that Mr. Eugene O'Neill has read Synge, and that is all. Except for two great dramatists, Synge and Mr. O'Casey, the Abbey Theatre has produced only a horrid monotony of primitive peasant plays. Mr. Yeats has written that a literature must begin in "folk"; but the trouble is that the Irish drama has remained in "folk"—the primitive literature of primitive men, and the most terrible thing of all is that the Abbey Theatre believes the expression of this Bronze Age civilisation to be its highest mission.

Last March a German University invited the Abbey to send a lecturer to give a short series of talks on the Irish Theatre. It is typical of the directors' mentality that they regarded this invitation as an occasion for pride. Since the days of Winckelmann German scholarship has been busy cataloguing human activity in the most remote countries in the world. That intellectual activity should have been discovered in Dublin in 1936 is no tribute to us; it is merely a proof of German thoroughness. We are world citizens as well as Irishmen, and until the Abbey Theatre ceases contemplating its own imaginary perfections and attempts to get into the stream of world culture, its activities can have little interest for us.

Mr. O'Connor suggested in the June number of *IRELAND TO-DAY* that it was a particular characteristic of the Bard, the type of the Irish system, that he "stopped." An examination of the extent to which this national characteristic has been operative both in the Abbey drama and in the management of the Theatre would be illuminating.

The function of an art theatre is to stage good plays well. If the theatre claims to be a national theatre it has additional duties—it should educate its dramatists and its public and by presenting the best contemporary and classical work keep them abreast of the thought and forms of other countries. In all these primary functions the Abbey Theatre fails. It stages an alarming amount of poor work, and whenever it turns its mind to the work of foreign authors it gives us plays as soft, as bad and as unimportant as Flecker's "Hassan." Have not the directors the entire dramatic literature of the world at their disposal? Irish dramatists and the Irish public, removed as they are from the vigorous intellectual life of the Mainland, are starved of the great drama of Europe, nor are Irish dramatists given any opportunity of familiarising themselves with modern forms. Expressionism, for instance, which was a living force on the Mainland nearly thirty years ago, is entirely unknown at the Abbey. Is it any wonder that no good plays are being written and that the Abbey audience has shrunk to those that laugh boisterously, make love and eat oranges?

To the charge that certain of their actors are unable to suit themselves to plays

other than those of the primitive peasant type and, consequently, should be got rid of, the Abbey answers that conditions have changed since the enthusiasm of those early days when nothing but the best work was acceptable, that the Theatre has now new responsibilities, that its actors have been very faithful to it and on that account it must be faithful to them. This point of view is quite remarkable. In no other one of the arts would incompetence be excused on such grounds. One can imagine what a reputable publishing firm would say if it were urged to publish a book of poems, not because of its intrinsic merit, but because the author was poor and had a widowed mother. The Abbey seems to wish to be a benevolent institution as well as an art theatre. As plays have to be selected which suit the actors we witness again the classic phenomenon of the tail wagging the dog.

One of the first duties of a theatre such as the Abbey is surely towards the source of drama. It is its business to encourage dramatists. No one desires that bad work should be produced, but bad work can surely be read within a reasonable time and returned to those from whom it came. There is nothing so utterly disheartening for an author as to have to wait for many years before a decision on his work is reached. Yet this appears to be the Abbey's normal practice. A few months ago a letter appeared in one of the daily newspapers in which an anonymous writer complained that he had sent a play to the Theatre in 1930 and that nothing had been since heard of it. The author expressed his indignation violently, and he is not to be blamed. Ordinarily the management does not even acknowledge the receipt of manuscripts, it then solemnly loses them, and if they happen to be found again it takes a very long time to make up its mind whether it will produce them or not. All the time the years are passing, and the author is too embittered to take part in the funny talk about assassinating directors. It is a pity that this indifference to the feelings of authors should exist. Mr. Yeats, deploring in his contemporary writings the decay of manners in Ireland, does not seem to exert himself to see if the virtue cannot be made flower in his own house.

What is most noticeable in the Abbey Theatre is a certain incompetence and a very definite lack of initiative and enthusiasm. One hears vague talk of new plays and new courses of action, none of which ever come to fruition. The public is kept entirely in ignorance, there is no point of contact between the directors and those outside who love drama and are anxious to serve it. Outside the Theatre those who are most interested in dramatic literature have long since lost confidence in the directors. They are not convinced that the directors are able even to judge between good and bad work. The late Lady Gregory said during the rehearsals for "The Shadow of a Gunman": "We are only putting it on so that the poor fellow will see how bad it is." Mr. O'Casey would never have had a play produced but for his own amazing tenacity. At a later date "The Old Lady Says 'No'" was refused. The Abbey in the sweet ease of its stall was not going to attempt to career over fresh pastures with Mr. Johnson for herd. Subsequently, however, the Theatre granted

£50 towards the production of the play by the Gate, an astonishing admission by the Abbey Theatre of its own incompetence.

Unquestionably the management of a theatre is difficult, but were the requisite enthusiasm and initiative present the Abbey would not be the sickly institution it is to-day. If the Abbey "had eaten Joyce's heart" it might have torn away the palm that Germany has taken from Russia, and Irish drama might hold the dominant position to which the Irish novel has been raised by one man, instead of being as she is, the poor shabby relative of the dramas of the world. But it is fruitless to waste time in regretting what might have been.

The position of the Abbey Theatre is an insecure one. Propped precariously by a small State grant, grudgingly given, it has neither popular affection nor respect. It seems now to be losing the last of the few constant friends that it had. Whether the Abbey is not impeding drama in Ireland and doing great disservice to literature by corrupting taste, is being widely and earnestly discussed. Many are calling for an immediate campaign to bring about its dissolution, and are willing to utilise every available means to further this end, pressure on the State, an appeal to popular feeling, organised campaigns in the press at home and in other countries.

Such talk, like most Irish talk, must come to nothing without the driving force of those who are earnest and serious-minded. In a year or two these latter will probably find that they will have to decide for themselves whether the Abbey is not a greater power for evil than for good. If they so decide and if they are sufficiently earnest and determined, the Abbey, which until now has fought only with men of straw, will have to face the fiercest onslaught in its history.

MERVYN WALL.

MURDER IN THE ABBEY

The Spirit of the Abbey is receiving so many kicks in the pants both here and elsewhere that it must find it difficult to be comfortable when enthroned amongst the mighty. This month I offer it mingled balm and bruises, to my own sorrow and, I am sure, the grief of mourning multitudes of readers.

The latest crime at the Abbey is "*Deirdre*." Now when a producer of real talent calls in two special actors with setting, costumes and music, to match, one expects results. I returned from holidays on "*Deirdre*" bent and received instead—the Stone Age. Really these atavistic urges in the Abbey must be curbed. After the well-known signature tune on the gong, a packed house beheld a fine setting, lit apparently by hell fire, wherein three aboriginals of the Cro-Magnon period playing at musicians, discoursed in mournful numbers having a distant relation to verse speaking, to the accompaniment of plonkings on an alleged harp. The standard set at the opening was well maintained. Denis Carey as Fergus was a strained effort to be alive, and his speaking, though pleasant, was not verse. Perhaps of course it was art concealing art, but if so, it was art indeed.

Jean Forbes-Robertson and Michael MacLiammoir did their best bit of acting by entering and then stopped. Instead mannerisms brought to a luscious fruition on Gate boards were offered us here, and the great unwashed loved it as always. We were also offered a Barriesque Deirdre which went straight to our fluttering hearts. Such twanging of heart strings!—but the real Deirdre, like myself, would have considered it likely that if the audience ever washed behind their ears there would be nothing left between them—she would not have given a hunched-shouldered, rolling-eyed rendering of “she was only a bird in a gilded cage.” Also, expecting as I was, polished stone axeheads of the later Antrim shore culture, I was surprised at Naoise’s natty shield and steely spear—he was certainly well in advance of his time, like his dark-faced executioner who wielded a wicked-looking implement of distinctly Saracenic origin.

Honestly, it *was* a pity, because much good work was wasted. Miss Forbes Robertson attacked her part from the wrong angle—there was no queenliness nor aloofness of beauty about her—although her characterisation was still logical and consistent, and her speaking voice, though very pleasant and clear was yet so monotonous that I could never follow her to the end of a speech. Michael MacLiammoir was the only one who did speak verse and that well, and when it came to a spot of ranting he put his whole heart into the job. M. J. Dolan as King Conchubhar reminded me of a secondhand clothes merchant dressed up for the charladies’ ball. Poor old Noah!

Dropping a hasty veil on this lamentable scene, I depute Cyril Cusack and Maureen Delaney to bear the promised balm to the suffering spirit. I was in town for the “Playboy” and was delighted by both of them. For some five minutes in Act II. the Widow Quinn *lived* as Synge dreamt her, but why don’t we get such work oftener? Both were delightful, too, in Seumas O’Kelly’s “*Meadowsweet*,” which is both “great gas” and good theatre. P. J. Carolan gave a fine, full-blooded performance as Monahan, and his one-man meeting with Cusack was great. Cyril Cusack is now really the juvenile lead in the Abbey, and in freshness of style, real poise and grip of technique and sympathetic teamwork, he has made a great advance on former years. Ria Mooney played the name part in “*The King of Spain’s Daughter*” with a quiet mastery that pleased me very much—and, by the way, this character study by Teresa Deevy in the Schnitzler or Molnar mode is worthy of more praise than it has received. “Katie Roche,” first produced some months ago, is simply a successful expansion of it. Its subtlety is too much for the Abbey, and the staging was the last word in bathos.

The Gate has made a welcome reappearance with “Master of the Revels” by Don Marquis, which is quite in the old Gate tradition, and merits much more attention than I can give it this month. Lennox Robinson’s new play, “When Lovely Woman” and then “Close Quarters” by W. O. Somin, adapted by Gilbert Lennox, are next to be produced, so there should be something interesting to report on next month. Meanwhile—what of the Abbey?

SEAN Ó MEADHRA

FILMS

THE IRISH FILM

DOES it exist, and if not, should it exist?

Does it exist? Those who would answer in the affirmative must search far for their evidence. "Smiling Irish Eyes," "Luck of the Irish," and similar productions, we can dismiss at once: by their very titles they are not made for consumption in this country. They exploit the Irish tradition as created and maintained by emigrants and their descendants. The keynote of that tradition is sentimentality: the keynote of most Irish literature and art at the present day is realism. It might almost be taken as axiomatic that any film which includes the word "Irish" in its title is not meant for Irish cinema-goers.

Nor will it be very profitable to consider the type of film represented by "The Informer" and several other recent attempts. These are straight melodramas, de-localised as much as possible, with the "sympathetic" side of the quarrel clearly marked, but the reasons for sympathy left discreetly vague. Those who went to "The Informer" expecting to see shots of Dublin found all outdoor scenes veiled in a thick fog—a libel on our translucent atmosphere!—through which only the principal actors could be made out. The designers did not even go to the trouble of painting in a backcloth of Nelson Pillar or the big crane on the North Wall. As for the plot, one gathered that some kind of fight was going on,

"But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out."

This type of film may be quite enjoyable, and quite free from stage-Irishism: but only at the cost of being quite free from Irishism of any kind.

We continue our search, therefore, and arrive next at that very celebrated film "Man of Aran." This is, at any rate, not stage-Irish. Flaherty has certainly avoided sentimentality. But has he brought to the filming of his fellow-Flahertys in Aran any attitude which differs from his attitudes to the Eskimos of "Nanook" or the South Sea Islanders of "Moana"? It is difficult to decide, since "Man of Aran" is easily the worst-constructed film that ever won a gold medal, and reveals not one attitude, but a struggle between many. Flaherty, a careful and patient observer and a magnificent cameraman, seems to care very little about what order his shots are finally arranged in; and since any "overtones" of a film, beyond the plain (or in this case not so plain) narrative, are conveyed mostly by the relations between the shots rather than by the shots themselves, we may scrutinise "Man of Aran" in vain for any indication of its director's attitude to anything.

Thus we have so far failed to find anything like a characteristically Irish film: and the reason is not hard to discover. It is a question of cash. A full-size sound film costs thousands of pounds to make, and its producers cannot possibly hope to recover this amount from the bookings of Irish cinemas. They must aim at a wider market: in practice, either the British or the

American market. In order to make it acceptable to these markets, they consider it necessary that the film should be either sentimentalised or de-localized. (I may say, however, that I have not yet seen "The Dawn," and if this film, financed entirely by its director, avoids these twin errors, I am prepared to forgive any number of faults of inexperience).

But the question now arises, is this de-localizing any harm? In other words, why should we wish for a characteristically Irish film? The answer is a matter of history. It has been found that the best productions of any country bear the distinctive stamp of the national character. Thus René Clair's comedies, with their high photographic key and generous gauzing, their deft touching of incidental points, the precision with which their satire hits the mark, are entirely in the tradition of the French handling of other arts: while the heavy, slow-moving, darkly-lit tragedies of Murnau or Galeen are precisely what we should expect from the compatriots of Wagner and Hauptman. In the case of Russian films, the specifically "Russian" character is to a great extent observed by the qualities attaching to the Communist philosophy; but one of the best Russian films, "Earth," has many of the qualities one associates with the characters of Tchekov or Dostoevsky. The distinctly unenthusiastic attitude of the Moscow authorities towards "Earth" may possibly be due to a recognition of this, as it is their avowed purpose to change the character of the Russian peasant.

We may conclude, then, that as long as there is no type of Irish film there will be no production of films in Ireland of artistic merit or sincerity. To put this another way, if a number of films of artistic merit are made in Ireland, an Irish style will be found to have evolved, willy-nilly.

But now we are up against the old question of finances. Can a film be made in Ireland which will pay its costs out of showings in Ireland? The answer is that it can: but not on standard stock.

Perhaps the nearest approach to the kind of film we have been looking for is Denis Johnston's "Guests of the Nation," made on small-size (16 mm.) film with an amateur camera. This film has never been shown publicly. In my judgment its photography, acting and cutting are at least equal to the average of full-size films. The smaller film strip, while reducing the production costs enormously, can be shown to audiences of several hundred people. There is no financial or technical reason why many more films of this type might not be made. Perhaps a special cinema in the capital might be opened for them. The future of the sub-standard film is certainly enormous.

G. F. DALTON

THINGS TO COME, 1936-37?

With the approach of winter months cinema-goers look forward to the attractions which managers as a matter of business would seem bound to provide. What may we look forward to in the coming winter? It is a matter of common opinion that the enterprise and initiative of Irish renters and

managers is notoriously slack and as a consequence the cultural, aesthetic and even entertainment standards of the cinema are as notoriously low. Taking into consideration the extensiveness of the cinema here there is no justification for the scarceness of films of real artistic and cultural value and only cold feet on the part of the distributors allied to or resulting from an underestimation of the intelligence or wishes of the public prevent them from being shown. The lack of variety in programmes springs from the choice of films from a single source where all is standardized and artists get no opportunity of carrying out their wishes or aspirations.

The only way in which this vicious uniformity can be broken is by the showing of the best continental work here in Dublin and the revival of acknowledged masterpieces of the Cinema. The continental film is easily acceptable after a short acquaintance as speech is kept to a minimum and the picture tells the story, besides which there is a much higher standard of responsibility and integrity prevailing amongst continental film makers. It is a matter of criticism that educational authorities have not taken an intelligent and enlightened interest in something which vitally affects their work. It would seem that a very limited vision goes into that work judging by their apathy. Ireland is very much behind other countries in its attitude towards films. In Ireland the cinema is nobody's child. When remarks are provoked they are generally shots in the dark, non-constructive and purely negative. The first thing to be done is to show what the cinema can do. Place the alternative before the people. On the plea of novelty alone and relief from the hackneyed and stereotyped the choice will be easy.

The position of the cinema in the past few years here has become intolerable for anyone who hopes to see it take its place as an asset in our national life. It is up to the public to make its demands. The public gets what it deserves. Moreover, it gets what it asks loudly and long for. This it must do. The position at present seems to be that the public are waiting for the film people to give the lead and the latter are waiting for the public to show its hand.

But to our point. For the coming season all we can hope for are Chaplin's "Modern Times," Korda's "Things to Come," "The Czardas Princess" and "Romeo and Juliet," and all the other magnificent works of cinema will not be shown. The above will represent an imperceptible drop in an ocean of mediocrity. A repeat of other years when films like "Don Quixote," "Barbarina," "Poil de Carotte" and "Jazz Comedy" were not shown to the Irish film public. The point is how long are the public going to stand for this state of affairs and how long are they to be the passive victims of commercial dope.

LIAM Ó LAOGHAIRE

BOOK SECTION

A SPECIAL NOTE.

This is the dull month for publishing. The Autumn lists are beginning to pour in—but not the Autumn books, and if one glances at our exiguous list one will observe that what little we have culled, from what little there is (of real interest) in the midway lists, contains only two books of any importance outside of fiction. These are Peter Fleming's travel book—always a good kind of book for Summer reading and Miss Haslip's *Parnell*, a popular subject at any time, and made topical now by the Schaufliker play. We take the opportunity of the idle month to partition the Book Section into a few obvious brackets, and to comment on the only one of these that needs comment—*The Irish Shelf*.

The purpose of this bracket is not merely to classify. Its purpose is to emphasise the immediate, topical *interest* of certain books for Irish readers; to suggest the *significance* of these books—admittedly at times adventitious, but none the less great (for us)—to Irish readers eager to build up a culture in accord with our national instinct of life; and, finally, the purpose of this bracket is to give the Book Section, as a whole, some pertinence to the *general policy* of the magazine. "In this book, and in this one," we shall suggest, merely by giving such books pride of place on *The Irish Shelf*, "there are, at least, some things that are particularly related to, or that annotate in some striking way, the ideal image of life which this magazine is trying to form, with the help of its readers and contributors, for the nation."

Looking back over our lists for the last three months we do not find many books that might have gone on *The Irish Shelf*, but there were several which we might well have argued about, with profit. And that brings us to another point: we are prepared, if faced by some book which at least challenges in an adequate manner, this ideal image of life towards which we are groping, or which discusses some aspect of life important to us, to debate its merits in this section by reviewing it as from two opposite points of view. There were, in our August number, at least, three such books—*Peig*, the autobiography of a Blasket woman; *Travel Without Maps*, the work of an English Catholic intellectual, Graham Greene; and *The Strange Death of Liberal England* which raised the whole problem of whether any liberalism exists, or can exist, within the ring of fire of our national tradition.

In our present number we can find no book from the current lists which seems even to challenge admittance to this bracket. But, however tardily, we review there one book which, when completed, may well occupy it again—that is Mr. Francis Hackett's first volume of *The Green Lion*. When it is completed we may be in a better position to discuss more fully the wisdom of the Censorship Board in placing it on the banned list.

If readers think that our reviewers have advised us ill about any book, then our pages are open to them; for we do not say we have formed our ideal image of life—we are merely hoping to form it by experiment and discussion. That it should so happen that the first book we enter on *The Irish Shelf* is a book that cannot, thanks to the Censorship, ever rest on an Irish shelf is, in itself, an accident whose significance needs no comment.

SEAN O FAOLAIN

THE IRISH SHELF

THE GREEN LION. By Francis Hackett. (*Ivor, Nicholson, and Watson.* 7s. 6d.)

The Green Lion is the first volume of a trilogy which, it is indicated, will cover the career of Jerry Coyne in Ireland and out of it. The first volume has been banned for general reading in the Irish Free State, on which there can be no other comment than to point emphatically to the section of the Censorship Act which says that the Board, in considering a book, "shall have regard to the literary, artistic, scientific, or historic merit, or importance and general tenor of the book" before it. The Board cannot have been in a position to say that *The Green Lion* is "in general tendency indecent" seeing that the novel is not before them in its entirety.

The general tenor of Mr. Hackett's novel, indeed, is only barely beginning to make itself clear when the first volume closes. We are given, with great deftness, with a crisp click of phrase that is partly Irish and partly American, with an emotive quality of words that is rare in modern literature, a wavering tapestry of the life of Kilkenny city and county—wavering because the design is still incomplete, and the character of Jerry is still being woven by incident.

Mr. Hackett has two complementary methods of presenting the character of his hero. His better method is to light, from as many angles as possible, by means of dramatic situations (a battle over a right of way, a thrust of passion in an elderly man) the many characters, mainly Jerry's relatives, who people both town and county. By that varied lighting they achieve the roundness of reality, and the reflections of their natures, in turn, on the boy at the centre, softly suggest and perhaps—that we shall no doubt, see later—create him. His other method is to show us the boy observing life with sensitiveness and intelligence and this prevents him from being merely something played on passively. There one wishes Mr. Hackett had been a little more ironical about Jerry; but this is the inevitable weakness of the semi-subjective novel, the over-percipient hero who brings a seed of experience to a flower of conclusion more quickly than occurs in slow-germinating life. It is a hard thing to ask Mr. Hackett to be ironical about his chief individual character when he is so obviously on his side rather than—for all the affectionate piety with which he regards it—the community that fed but did not nourish him. But it would have added considerably to the balance of the whole, to the feeling that the author was calmly at the fulcrum and not levering his character into some strategical position suitable to his theme.

As to the theme it might be summed up in the phrase "dreadful docility" as applied to the attitude of the people towards challenging life. Lovingly he depicts the sensuous attraction of the background, the fields under their overcast skies, the slow-moving river beneath slow-moving clouds, the cattle plastered heavily into the grass, and he is at pains to do justice to the variety of common life; yet, one gathers, that in his feeling, no rich, brave, adventurous fullness of being grows out of that rich land; that the modes of life are exiguous, or at any rate not sufficiently exploited; that the code, the institutions, the instinct of life, of this lyrical-enough world of the Irish countryside, suggest a plane of existence that can only be admired on terms of a spiritual surrender. Well—he has set the stage for his rebel, and I must say that I look forward with the keenest interest to the next act of his drama.

All that he implies about the Irish countryside is, as far as it goes, true enough, and the problem we all face is implicit in his first volume—the problem

of finding within the simplicity of the Irish world a way of life that does justice to the whole man. Even if Mr. Hackett is not interested in quite that problem ; even if his hero finds in simple revolt, and perhaps exile, another way out, his ultimate development must still be of interest to us : for if he leaves the shades of one prison-house, the shades of another must close upon him just as thickly and as clammy, and to the business of freeing himself he cannot but bring—even from that inadequate youth of his in Kilkenny—some files and pass-keys not wholly useless. But if *The Green Lion*, on the other hand, should actually show us a young man niching himself in all the independence of maturity back into the Irish world, not wholly rejecting it but rather hacking out in it a corner for himself, enriching that world by his conquest over it, then this novel may well be the most important novel written around what is unquestionably the basic problem of life in Ireland, i.e., the function and place of the individual in what is at least in danger of becoming a regimented civilisation.

S. O'F.

OTHER PLACES

CHINESE TRAVEL

NEWS FROM TARTARY. By Peter Fleming. (*Jonathan Cape*, 12s. 6d.).

Mr. Fleming is one of those fortunate people whose talents are complementary. He has a talent for travelling, that consists of a redoubtable constitution, an accommodating palate, a passion for the wilderness, the luck he deserves, and a nature which appears to be quite fearless. He has a talent for writing, of which the component parts are a selective and observant eye, an easy humour, a flair for the happy adjective, and a style that will describe a landscape with honour or neatly convey a joke. Of the marriage of these two talents has *News from Tartary* been born ; which is very good news indeed.

Mr. Fleming left Peking in February, and arrived in Kashmir in September. His caravan consisted of two ponies, four camels, himself, and Mlle. Maillart—a lady whose innumerable gifts would make one of Ouida's heroes seem a comparatively dull fellow. For the ponies and two of the camels the journey was too arduous ; so Mr. Fleming and Mlle. Maillart crossed most of High Tartary on foot. Nor is Tartary called High Tartary without reason. The height of the mountain passes is thirteen or fourteen thousand feet, and from the stony cliffs above blow mountain gales that are heavy with sleet. But a little farther on—a couple of weeks' journey—the traveller is slogging through soft sand beneath a sky like a furnace and a deadly sun. The camels failed and the ponies foundered, but Mr. Fleming and Mlle. Maillart played their miniature gramophone, doctored the ailing Mongols with quack lenitives, and went on. Let that be an index of their physical robustness.

The significant part of their journey was the crossing of Sinkiang. This is a province more hidden from the world than Lhasa, a province from which for several years there had been little news but darkish rumours of intrigue, war and rebellion. The Chinese Government would issue no passports to Sinkiang, and the better-known entrances were efficiently policed. Mr. Fleming and Mlle. Maillart therefore decided to travel without passports, and elected to go by a route that nobody thought practicable, and was consequently almost unguarded. Let this decision, and its successful outcome, be taken as indices of their courage and their luck.

The caravan was armed with a rook rifle, a weapon that has already become one of the famous weapons of the world, like Mons Meg and Excalibur.

Discussing the shooting of a gazelle with this modest weapon, Mr. Fleming speaks of its 'diffident report.' There, if ever there was one, is the *mot juste*. And describing a night march he can write like this: 'Presently the moon shone. Scrawny feeble patches of tamarisk solidified, grew black, put on strange shapes and tired our eyes. The sand was silver, and the dust we breathed hung like an emanation, as of steam, around the caravan. Its flanks were pricked by little red eyes where men were smoking pipes. White horses gleamed like wraiths, the camels towered and were monstrous. Hour after hour the line of animals moved westwards with silent, shuffling strides.'

This, however, is not really typical of his style, which is in general a cunning simplicity that conveys without obvious preservatives a great many flavours, and most happily reveals the essential amateurism of the author—I use the word in its true sense: Mr. Fleming is an amateur of writing, a cavalier of adventure. There have not been, in recent years, many journeys more remarkable than this casually heroic peregrination; and no comparable adventure—save Mr. Fleming's own excursion in Brazil—has ever been described with less solemnity.

ERIC LINKLATER

THIS WAS (?) SPAIN

DON GYPSY. By Walter Starkie. (*John Murray*. 10s. 6d.).

It is not the least of Dr. Starkie's achievements that he has brought back joy to the learned travel-book and thus restored to the civilised reader one of the lost provinces of literature, long held by the earnest barbarian. Yet there is melancholy as well as joy in this account of his journey with a fiddle through Morocco, and from Tangier and Ceuta to Algeciras, Granada, Seville and Cordoba—the route followed by the Moors when Isabella the Catholic, the Unifier of Spain, drove them forth and the route they are following to-day as they are led back to Spain by Franco the Catholic. It is something more than the wanderer's melancholy of Jaques; it is the melancholy of a civilised mind trying not to notice too often the stupid injustices of Society breeding the germs of Society's decay; "All they do" said one of the broken ones on the periphery of the circle of merchant, priest and aristocrat, "is to tell us we're as poor as rats and that we must raise ourselves up. Up to what?" "Give me wine of the Moor" calls the prostitute, "Christian wine has too much water; it has been baptised." And yet another of those who dare not shake themselves "for fear their rags would fall off" sums up his political idealism in the wistful slogan "*Libertarian Communism*."

But melancholy and defeat never get the better of the fun; life is a colourful business, a shade cynical at times, a shade too sentimental perhaps at other times, too conscious of Don Quixote and the amoral progress of Gil Blas. Yet even this fault becomes a virtue in Ireland where Don Quixote too often grows up to be a Torquemada, tilting not at the windmills, but at those who would cheerfully throw their caps over them. The hue of Spain's Africa is in the book as well as the variegated hues of Andalusia; music-loving bawds, swaggering picaroons, gypsies, circuses, pimps, beggars, and ladies good and bad process gaily to the airs of *coplas*, dancing the real tangos and Baile Flamenco against a background of patios, cathedrals and the ogive-shaped windows of the Alhambra. The telling is like much of the music in the book, now an airy rise and fall of arabesques, now filigrees touched with moonbeams. Once or twice the author becomes angry, as when he denounces the stage-Spaniard and the stage-Andalusia created for globe-trotters, and the degradation that has fallen on the word "Flamenco." At times lustrous eyes and lips tempt him,

but he carries his virtue unsullied from the cities to the open road and the lonely pleasures of a wandering fiddler.

This book may well be the last account of Spain as it was, the Spain where the picaroon was free to parody the chivalry that impoverished him, the Spain made by Isabella and Ferdinand, now sleeping in Granada within sound of Moorish war-cries.

MICHAEL BURKE

SCOTTISH FOLKSONG

FATHER ALLEN'S ISLAND. By Amy Murray. (*The Moray Press*. 8s. 6d.)

To any one who cherishes the hope that literature may still live in Ireland, whether it be in English or Irish, the extraordinary jargon which has been called Kiltartan English is particularly hateful. They see in it no lapse into barbarism, but a misleading fingerpost pointing into a morass of false tradition. Scotland suffered also from a Celtic fringe of minor poets and story writers (Neil Munro has said the last word about them in *The Brave Days*). Knowing no Gaelic and wishing to know none, they project their sentimentalism on the Gaeltacht and in a nursery jargon faintly resembling a bad translation they tell 'of the wonders that do be in the world an' you not knowing them at all.' Beginning with that mythical lady 'Fiona MacLeod' the cult was nobly carried in *Songs of the Hebrides*. But at least Rev. Kenneth MacLeod knew his Gaelic and could restrain the too-ardent rhapsody of 'Cailleach nan óran.'

Now comes Miss Amy Murray, for whom her publishers claim that she is 'American born and with no knowledge of Gaelic'; and sad to say, her theme is the Isle of Eriskey and Máighistir Ailein MacDónaill. Poor Father Allan, beloved to this day though near a score of years have passed, how he would have laughed over this book. He must have been very patient with this enthusiast and her 'little harp of twenty-eight strings.' The book is presumably a record of six months spent in the Hebrides in search of Folksong. Many of the songs have appeared before, but I suspect them all, on finding one on page 129 familiar since Dr. Hyde's *Love Songs of Connacht*. I know something of the islands and their songs, but is this particular verse in Scottish Gaelic?

If soberly written such a book might have real freshness and charm. One wonders how it imposed on Padraic Colum. As it stands, it's just too dreadful.

Perhaps a dreadful book was needed, in order to evoke a proper biography of Máighistir Ailein. If this be the outcome, then will I freely forgive Miss Murray.

COLM O LOCHLAINN

A JOURNALIST AT LOURDES

WHAT IS THIS LOURDES? By John Gibbons. (*Methuen*. 5s.).

Mr. Gibbons intends this 'write-up' of Lourdes for the ordinary man who is not particularly interested in theology.

The author, in some pages of this book, particularly in his despicion of the Torchlight Procession, proves himself a very fine descriptive journalist.

Mr. Gibbons is a Catholic, and his book is written mainly for those of his fellow-Englishmen who are not of that faith—to many of his readers in this country, who take the Miracle of Lourdes more or less for granted, the simplicity of his style and his very occasional apologetic may be somewhat jarring.

But this sketch of Lourdes is for the most part very interesting and enlightening. The very garishness of Lourdes; its huge crowds of all nationalities;

its discomfort; the crudity of the baths; the seeming indifference to the ordinary precautionary rules of health—everybody stands about in a drenching downpour of rain for four or five hours, even the sick lie out in these downpours; the fact that healthy men will bathe in and even drink of the waters in which hundreds of disease-ridden and uncleanly poor have bathed—all these things point to a simplicity and reality of faith which is not betrayed.

The circumstance about Lourdes which strikes one most after reading this book is that it is essentially a place which belongs as of right to the poor, the illiterate, the half-witted, the diseased. There cannot be much there that is satisfying to the aesthetic sense.

Mr. Gibbons' book may be recommended to all who desire, in a compact form, information about Lourdes. For those who will overlook the defects of style and somewhat slight apologetic, there is here a clear and honest account of Lourdes as the author saw it.

THOMAS FITZGERALD

OTHER TIMES

MISS HASLIP'S PARNELL

PARNELL. By Joan Haslip. (*Cobden-Sanderson*. 15s. net.).

On the wall of every home in Ireland, there was, in the late Eighties, an oleograph of Charles Stewart Parnell, surrounded by medallion portraits of his principal lieutenants. The reviewer can recall a Sunday evening, in the beginning of 1891, when his family just returned from attendance at evening devotions, foregathered for a confirmation of the spiritual advantages imparted by that ceremony. The picture was removed with much gravity from its setting, the poker was reddened in the fire, and, with solemn rubric, was passed by his father through the eyes of Parnell. It was then restored to its frame, and remained, for many a day after, a lesson in virtue and a warning to evil-doers.

What was the meaning of the *acharnement* which characterised the period of the "Split"; of that rancour beside which the acerbities of 1922 almost assumed the nature of a general benevolence? Joan Haslip makes it all clear to us in her book on Parnell. It is the work of one in ardent spiritual sympathy with her hero. We, the middleaged in Ireland, who had political contacts with the Irish Parliamentary Party only in the days of its decline, are apt to forget the status of utter social degradation in which the owner of Avondale found the people of this country. As we hear the story from Miss Haslip's pen, no preliminary attitude of emotional detachment can prevent the reader from understanding the spell of that amazing personality, and the glamour which he imparted to all forms of parliamentary action by his astute and skilful leadership. The life of a public man can usually be written without very close reference to his domestic concerns. They may even be irrelevant and intrusive. But in the case of Parnell, national and personal motives were so internetted, that the biographer must indent both romances at every stage. This Miss Haslip has done with considerable skill. Her seine drags with a wide range and comes to the surface with hauls of alternating interests. The earlier part of her story is told with facility, but when she reaches the period of the Piggott forgeries, her account has something of inspiration in it, and from that to the end, through the sordid happenings of the Divorce Court, the narrative is never, for a moment, dull. It is one of the best books on the "Uncrowned King."

Certain points of view of the writer will grate a little on the reader here. For one thing, an unnecessary deference to social standards which are somewhat artificial. Much is made of the fact that Parnell was a "gentleman"—and a landed gentleman at that. The contrast between him and his Party is over-emphasised. Then the O'Shea business. Miss Haslip's style would have lost nothing by a little more reticence about the physical charms and disposition of the Captain's wife. From Parnell's side, she assumes it to be part of her duty to build up, out of the wreck of the affair, a moral mansion for her hero's soul—with results that are hardly convincing. And again, she has buried herself so successfully in the literature of the period, that she presents us with an outworn interpretation of Fenian activities and personalities. She is not in a position to understand the outlook of people like O'Donovan Rossa or John Devoy. She is very fair to Dillon and O'Brien; less so to Davitt; and Healy is treated with an indulgence which takes no account of him as the factor having most responsibility for lowering the standards of public decency during those years of bitterness.

One charm of the book must be insisted upon—it enables the reader to move and have his being with a living Parnell. We see his gait, and hear his voice, and catch the lustre in those eyes which were to be so cruelly blinded at Castle-comer, and which were to close for ever, so soon after, in the sorrowful isolation of Brighton.

S. F.

ANCIENT SCIENCE

SCIENCE IN ANTIQUITY. By Benjamin Farrington. London: (Thornton Butterworth. *Home University Library* No. 179. 2s. 6d. net.)

It is no easy task to compress within two hundred and fifty brief pages the imposing record of scientific achievement in the ancient world. True, great progress has been made in the last twenty years towards a real understanding of this most important subject. One of the merits of Professor Farrington's singularly clear and very readable little volume is his combination of familiarity with the best modern thought and capacity for striking individual judgment. Thus he is almost the first, apart from writers of specialised articles in periodicals to do justice to the totally new light in which the work of Aristotle has been put by Jaeger, now departed from Berlin to Chicago.

Another pleasing feature of his book is his vigorous rejection of "le miracle grec" as far as science is concerned, and insistence that the Greeks, as they said themselves, were really the heirs of the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians. He is equally vigorous in his refusal to admit any merit to the Romans as scientific thinkers or workers, a refusal which contrasts amusingly with Cicero's complacency in his *Tusculan Disputations*.

Professor Farrington fittingly stresses the central importance of medicine for the development of the scientific spirit in Greece. Nowhere else is the refusal to be bound by "hypotheses," and the close attachment to the object, so evident as in the Hippocratean *Tract on Ancient Medicine*, which he quotes at length. It is worth speculating whether this objectivity does not arise from the nature of medicine itself by contrast with astronomy or physics, where the teleological aspect is always breaking in. Professor Farrington draws a sharp distinction between Ionian science, with its "implicit assumption that the universe as a whole is intelligible in terms of everyday experience," and the preoccupation of Plato with the soul and with ethics, which he happens to think was in the long run fatal to science.

Is his definition of science here not somewhat narrow? It is of course consonant with the definition till recently fashionable among physicists, but one had thought that nowadays this was being widened. Full justice is done in this little work to Aristotle, upon whom, after all, the influence of Plato was not so deleterious as one might have expected.

The reason for the decay of ancient science is a very obscure subject, and Professor Farrington will hardly claim to have settled it. We might suggest that the character of the Romans, which he so well brings out, had more to do with it than slavery or the Bible. The implication on p. 244 that the Church is the "traditional enemy" of scientific research is sweeping, to say the least of it. But the number of the questions raised by this brilliant piece of popularisation is only a tribute to its success.

M. T.

POETRY AND DRAMA

THREE IRISH PLAYS

EXILES. By James Joyce. New Plays Series. (*Cape*, 3s. 6d.).

THE MOON IN THE YELLOW RIVER. By Denis Johnston. (*Cape*, 3s. 6d.)

BOYD'S SHOP. By St. John Ervine. Allen and Unwin. 3s. 6d.

Reading is like studying things at school. One plants a bulb in the mind, with every book; ten years later the winter of experience brings it up. One realises suddenly, let us say, what exactly was meant by such a line as "*Joy, whose hand is ever at his lip, bidding adieu,*" or "*l'avare Achéron ne lâche point sa proie.*" To return to *Exiles*, in this new cheap edition, nearly twenty years after, is to find the tip of the green plant barely edging up. But if I do not yet understand it, and we probably never shall entirely, that is partly the fault of Joyce and partly the fault of the inexpressible in the subject. However, I do feel, now, that the psychology simply *has* to be so covert and the atmosphere darkly eleusinian—

Robert: Only the impulse towards youth and beauty does not die. (*He points to the porch.*) Listen!

Bertha: (*in alarm*): What?

Robert: The rain falling. Summer rain on the earth. Night rain. The darkness and warmth and flood of passion. To-night the earth is loved—loved and possessed. Her lover's arms around her: and she is silent.

Bertha: (*Listens intently*). Hush!

Robert: (*Listening, smiles*) Nothing. We are alone. (*A gust of wind blows in through the porch, with a sound of shaken leaves. The flame of the lamp leaps.*)

Bertha: Look! (*pointing to the lamp*).

Robert: Only wind . . .

If this is strange lighting for Ranelagh I feel that one is meant to get that sense of human beings in the half dark, with the wind in the wet leaves. One is meant to get the sense of men and women snouting like moles small tunnels of personality through a darkness composite of instinct, local convention, ancient fears. Nothing can possibly be conceived objectively here since Joyce sees (and always sees) character, not as finished and solid, but as fluxive, and kept fluxive by constant compression both from without and within. And to express that feeling he makes his victims painfully conscious of the conflict, which they either direct as with Richard (the Stephen Daedalus of the play) or only occasionally advert to, as with Robert (its Malachi Mulligan.)

Joyce really is interested in four main types, and three of them appear here again—Stephen-Richard, the tragically aware mole groping to a personal freedom of almost impossible dimensions and gone nearly neurotic in the process; Robert-Malachi, the ironically aware mole who has long since made his rendezvous with life at many an unbloody barricade; Beatrice Bloom, the pathetically half-aware mole; and (unrepresented in *Exiles*) old Daedalus and all his kin, the joyously unaware moles who do not mole at all. They are not real people in the three-dimensional sense; they are real symbolically rather than actually, and so it is the heavy, dank atmosphere ('The rain falling . . . summer rain on earth.') and the personal sense of agony, that galvanises the play, and makes it, generally, more impressive to read than act. I used to think this play not very Irish. I now feel there is a great deal of Ireland in it—coloured tropically in the powerful Joyceian way—the subterrene quality of the Irish nature, the cruelty of our moral conscience (?), the sometimes nasty smear of our social atmosphere with all its evasiveness and its love of secrecy. But it is not a kind picture, and it is in any case too personal a reaction to be considered pictorially at all. Indeed, it is somewhat strange that so finished a craftsman ever thought the subject suited to the stage.

There is no need to speak of *The Moon in the Yellow River* or *Boyd's Shop*. The English took the one more solemnly than we did, and the other more lightly. Mr. Johnson strikes me as a writer whose brilliance is deliberately intended to dazzle, not to illuminate, and his sincerity is something of which we are always, as a result (as in this play) more than a little in doubt. However, that may be due merely to the fact that his intellect is purely destructive, that he has so far shown no quality of tenderness or human sympathy, and leaves one wondering whether he is a man incapable of poetry or a man afraid of it; even, one wishes, if he would hate something passionately! In spite of such grand bits in his work, as the magnificent domestic scene in *A Bride for the Unicorn*, we must feel that his virtuosity is rather an evasion, as if he said, "I will not speak of what I feel, but I will make a joke of it"—like the ancient Greeks who avoided the pain of a scorpion's sting by riding on an ass. But is Art a beast of burden?

Still, he does feel, and can make us quiver. It is years since Mr. St. John Ervine felt anything; he does not pretend to, and the merits of both these finished dramatists is indicated by the old tag about life being a tragedy to those who feel, and a comedy to those who think. In other words, Mr. Johnston has less brains, and Mr. Ervine less heart than (thank God!) they think. We may get a certain malicious pleasure out of that, when Mr. Johnston weeps at his own frock-coat wit, and Mr. Ervine makes complete hay of his own Belfast sentiment. What artless Dodgers these innocent Anglo-Irish are!

SEÁN O'FAOLÁIN

NOTES ON OUR CONTRIBUTORS

SEAN O'SULLIVAN, R.H.A., designs our front cover.

OWEN SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON, B.A. (T.C.D.), sends his contribution from France, where he will explore at first hand the fast-developing crisis of Western Europe.

AMBROSE MARTIN has had life-long contacts with both Spain and South America. In the Basque Country he is hailed as one of themselves.

MAIRIN MITCHELL, well-known journalist and author, is extensively travelled and knows Spain intimately.

PEADAR O'DONNELL, author of *Islanders*, *Adrigool*, *The Knife*, *The Edge of the Stream* and other works, chanced to be an eye-witness of the Civil War in Spain.

PROFESSOR W. F. TRENCH of Trinity College, Dublin, has given us this illuminating angle on Swift, which was the subject of a lecture by him in the sister University in Dublin.

C. MAC FHIONNLAOICH, B.A.R.C.H., to give his name the Irish form by which he is better known among his friends, is Assistant City Architect in Dublin.

ERNEST O'MALLEY, renowned for his exploits as a high officer of the Irish Republican Army, has been a very intense student in Spain, America North and South. His book is eagerly awaited and derives its title from an old Ulster proverb: "It is easy to sleep on another man's wound."

PATRICK P. O'DONOVAN, M.SC., D.PH., worked manually through every phase of Industrial Alcohol production on the Continent.

LYLE DONAGHY, recognised in more than one published work as a poet of sincerity and worth.

JOHN LANE, of whose work it can be safely prophesied more will be heard in years to come.

DAVID QUINN, PH.D., Lecturer in University College, Southampton, again contributes verse of feeling.

JOHN DOWLING, B.A., B.D.S., returns to the fray and art, especially in so far as artists are enabled to live, finds in him a stout protagonist.

EAMONN O GALLCOBHAI, composer and executant, throws a new light on the function of the past in the present.

MERVYN WALL, well known in dramatic circles, speaks plainly and is joined by our no less fearless Theatre Editor,

SEAN O MEADHRA, from whom as usual trenchant analyses of current plays appear in this section.

GEOFFREY DALTON, expertly puts before us what many laymen have been eager to learn of the possibilities of the Irish film.

LIAM O LAOGHAIRE, who has substituted a more pressing theme for discussion than the Documentary film.

SEAN O FAOLAIN, our Book Section Editor, author of *A Nest of Simplefolk*, *Midsummer Night's Madness*, *Bird Alone*, etc., one of the most prolific yet meticulous writers of to-day.